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REBECCA WEST STINGS

DINOSAURS MAUL CREATIONISTS

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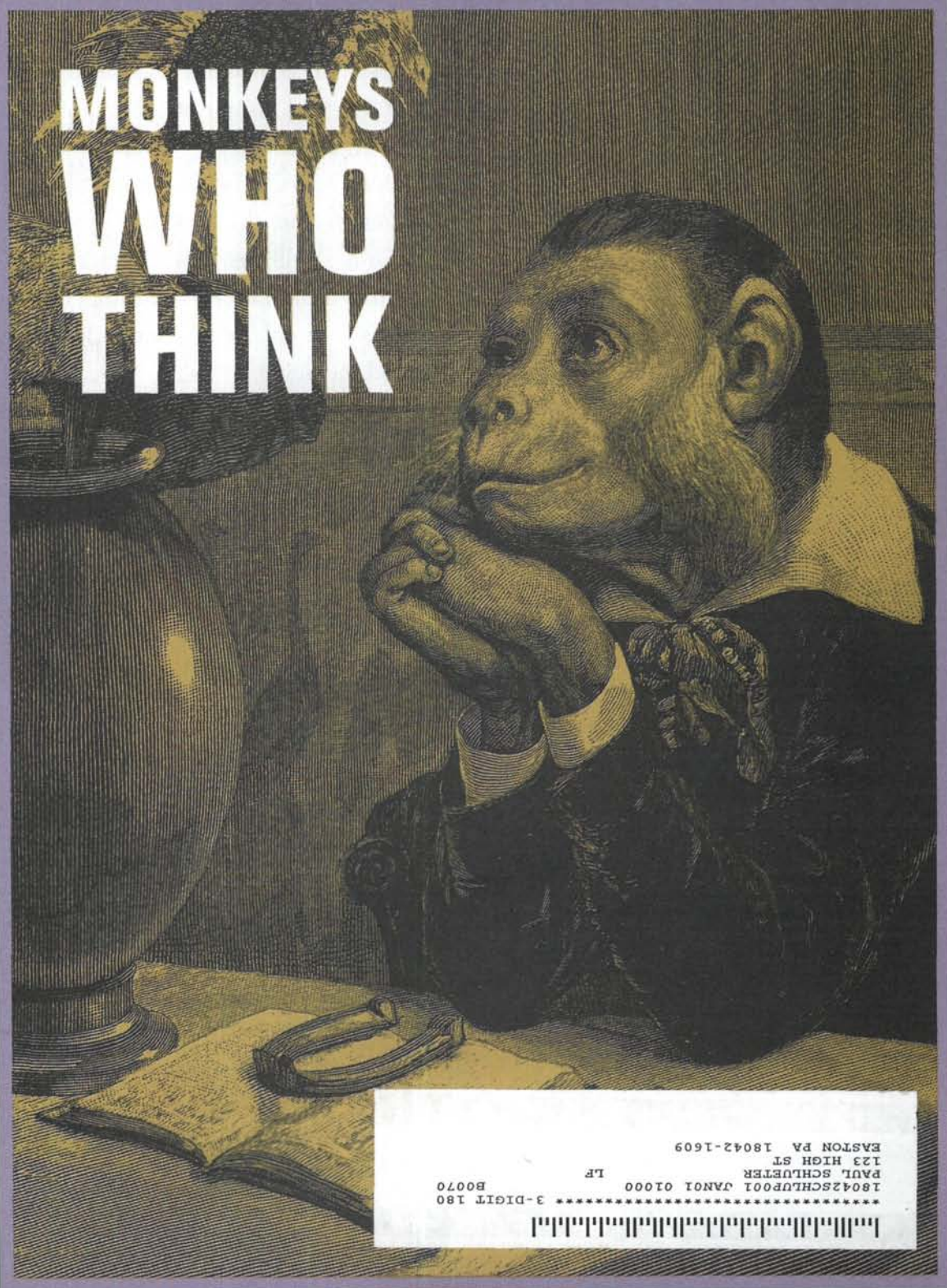
ROME FALLS

...AND OLIVER STONE STRIKES BACK



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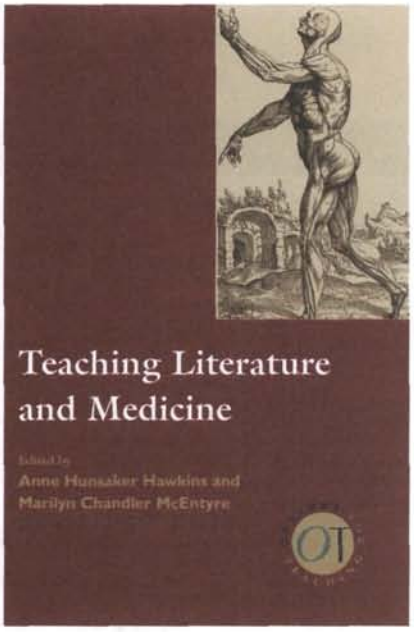

Teaching Literature and Medicine

Anne Hunsaker Hawkins and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, eds.

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FEBRUARY 2000

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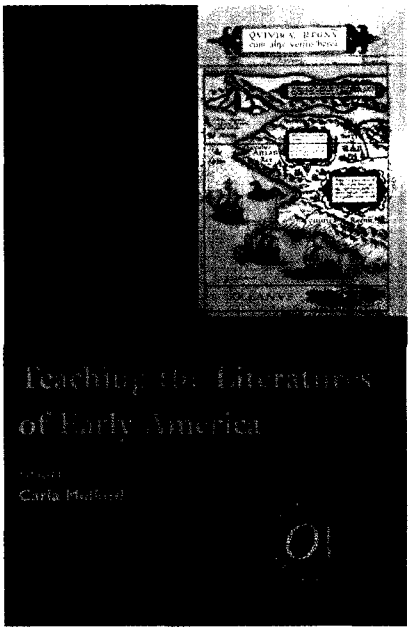

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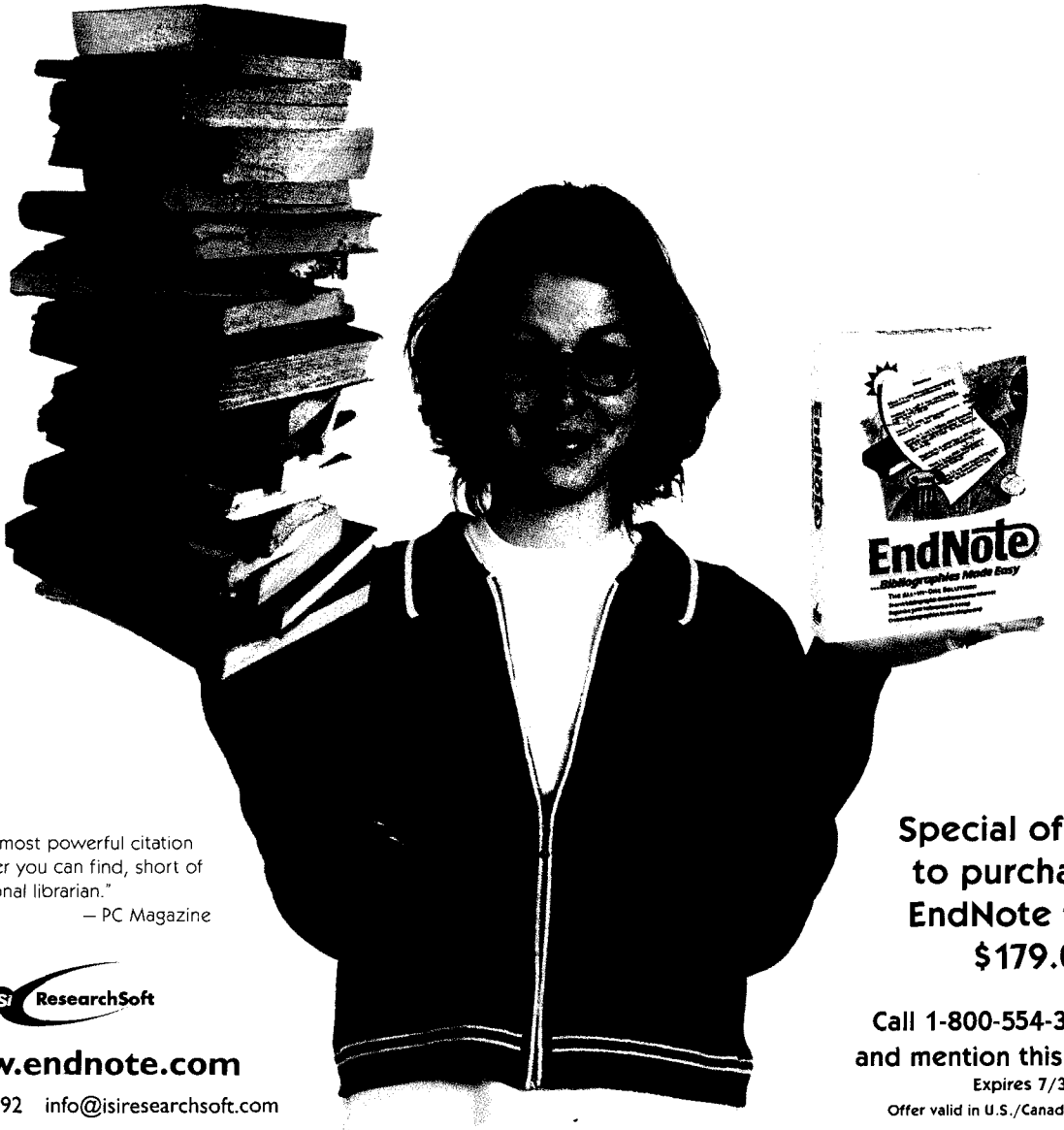

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Maggie Sokolik received her Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from UCLA, and focuses on composition for both native and non-native speakers at UC Berkeley. Jim Duber has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan, specializing in ESL.

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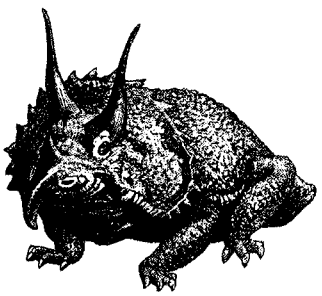

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A mixed language or jargon used in the Levant, consisting largely of Italian words deprived of their inflexions. Also transf. *Any mixed jargon formed as a medium of intercourse between people speaking different languages.* Fig. *1870* LOWELL, Among my bks. *Ser. I. 170 "What concern have we with the shades of dialect in Homer or Theocritus, provided they speak the spiritual* lingua franca *that abolishes all alienage of race?"*

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They can definitely count to three. They seem to know who's in the mirror. But can they empathize? Marc Hauser reads the primate mind. BY JENNIFER SCHUESSLER

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Lingua Franca (ISSN 1051-3310) is published nine times per year (Dec/Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov). © 2000 in the US by University Business, LLC, 22 West 38th Street, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 302-0336; Fax: (212) 302-0847. All rights reserved. **Subscription Rates:** $35.00 for one year, $62.00 for two years. Additional postage per year outside the US: add $11 surface post, $21 airmail. US funds only. MasterCard/Visa/ American Express accepted. **Subscription Orders,** changes of address, subscription inquiries: Lingua Franca, PO Box 5158, Brentwood, TN 37024-5158; (800) 719-5854 **E-Mail:** subs@linguafranca.com **Web Site:** www.linguafranca.com **Back Issues:** $6 US, $7 Can/Mex; $8 other foreign. All orders prepaid by check to NY office. **Newsstand Distribution:** Ingram Periodicals: (800) 627-6247. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Lingua Franca, PO Box 5158, Brentwood, TN 37024-5158. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

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A PASSING PROBLEM

I was surprised to see myself cited in "Van the Man" [March] and appalled at how grossly erroneous the citation was: I have *not* written a biography of Nella Larsen (a fact easily checked); I did *not* attend a panel discussion on the Harlem Renaissance at the Modernist Studies Association (MSA) conference; and I have *never* referred to *Nigger Heaven* as *Negro Heaven*.

Here's the truth. I presented a paper called "Passing as Modernism" at the MSA conference. After giving examples of passing as I develop that concept in my book, *Passing and Pedagogy: The Dynamics of Responsibility* (Illinois, 1999), I said of Carl Van Vechten and in reference to the slipperiness of that term:

> Surely [we think] Barbara Johnson's essays on African American literature differ markedly from Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*, a novel which struck many, including [D.H.] Lawrence, as cashing in on the fad of the New Negro, but which Wallace Thurman, in his *Messenger* review, found to "pulsate" with the "genuine rhythms peculiar to Harlem."

I referred to Van Vechten's novel only once more:

> Modernist writers, from Lawrence in his review of *Nigger Heaven* and Walter White's *Flight*, to Heba Jannath in her essay on passing in Nancy Cunard's *Negro Anthology*, to [Elsie Clews] Parsons in her essay on the Zuni *la'mana*, have portrayed passing as betraying conventional markers of racial sexual difference, thereby undermining the belief in intrinsic differences.

The irony of the misattribution is that in my book, as in that paper, I explicitly resist such efforts to be liberally correct. On the contrary, I argue that the risks we run in crossing identity boundaries, and the discomfort such crossing can provoke, are integral to the dynamics of responsibility I conceptualize in terms of passing.

If it weren't such a gross distortion of my work, I suppose I would find the misattribution amusing. The article has me passing as Thadious Davis, the author of a biography on Nella Larsen and the other presenter on my MSA panel—though I never heard her re-title that novel either.

PAMELA L. CAUGHIE
Professor of English
Director of Women's Studies
Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

The editors reply:
We regret the erroneous statement about the MSA panel and extend our apologies to Professor Caughie.

WITHIN THE SYSTEM

Laura Secor's article "Testaments Betrayed: Yugoslavian Intellectuals and the Road to War" [September, 1999] is a fair and evenhanded account of the political transformation of the Belgrade Praxis philosophers. Gathered around the "literary clan" of the so-called father of the nation, Dobrica Cosic, this "philosophical vanguard" of Greater Serbia penetrated, in the midst of Milosevic's brutal pillaging of Yugoslavia, the centers of power. As such, as Secor correctly infers, they share structural responsibility for the war in Yugoslavia.

In his letter to *Lingua Franca* [February], the former Praxist Svetozar Stojanovic favorably presents himself as a central figure in the failed process of democratic transformation in Serbia but denies he contributed to this failure. The reader is left with a paradox: How could Stojanovic simultaneously have occupied an important position in Milosevic's power structure and served as chair of the Council for Democratic Transformation of Serbia?

In his work, Stojanovic has emphasized his close ties to Dobrica Cosic and his role in encouraging Cosic to accept Milosevic's offer of the Yugoslav presidency. And yet he has also acknowledged that "Milosevic's primary calculation has been to use [Cosic] in order to breach through the political, diplomatic, economic, and informational blockade and establish contact with the Western world...but at the same time not to run into a significant risk of losing the power he had captured earlier." He continues: "Exposing...Cosic, Milosevic attempted to present a more acceptable face, but at the same time he prevented any significant distribution and sharing of power."

As is evident from Stojanovic's account, Milosevic inaugurated internal opposi-

continued on page 66

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JUST PASSING THROUGH

IT COST GUSTAVE FLAUBERT a year and a half, many miles on horseback, and a case of syphilis to make his grand tour of the Middle East. These days, St. Olaf College, in Northfield, Minnesota, has whittled the grand tour down to a long semester. The undergraduates cover political science in Turkey, sociology in Morocco, history in Egypt, religion in Israel, plus a final course taught by their American faculty leader—for $17,700 dollars and five academic credits.

The nineteenth century's great *Wanderjahr* may have gone up in a puff of smoke from one of Flaubert's Cairo hookahs, but for decades the spirit lived on in a poorer American cousin: the junior year abroad. Lately, however, this year of cultural immersion has been supplanted by shorter sojourns and exported American course work—auguring an era of cross-cultural contact that some experts complain is tailored to fit a professionally minded generation raised on Ritalin.

Enrollments for American students to study abroad have increased by a stunning 83 percent in the last ten years, but fewer than one in ten of these students now opts for the traditional year abroad. In fact, 90 percent of all undergraduates who study overseas go for one semester or less—often much less. Some schools, like Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, offer study-abroad programs con-

When undergraduates study abroad, they typically go for one semester or less—often much less.

AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SUDAN

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fined to a January term that lasts only a month. Indiana University awards students three credits for a semester-long course on their home campus that culminates with twelve days of coral-reef snorkeling in the Cayman Islands.

One might wonder if these short stays and multidestination tours pack the educational wallop that study abroad is meant to provide. "I've heard study-abroad professionals refer to them as one form of vacation or another," says Clayton Hubbs, editor of the international-study and -work magazine *Transitions Abroad*. "It finally becomes a question of whether this is a study-abroad program or a tour."

According to the study-abroad historian William Hoffa, America's earliest foreign-study programs mostly belonged to small, private women's colleges, which were eager to aid their language majors. Before the war interrupted student travel in 1939, U.S.-organized programs sent only about two thousand students across the Atlantic to conjugate their verbs on Old World soil. After the war, however, the U.S. government encouraged student stints in the impoverished countries of Western Europe; the GI Bill even paid for study at the Sorbonne. Postwar soon gave way to Cold War: Exchange programs and foreign study brought students not only to NATO allies in Europe but also to modernizing Japan and even Soviet Russia.

In the wake of the Cold War, however, a new set of priorities lures students overseas: namely, a mandate to attain "global competence for work." Twice as many students now go abroad to study business and management as to study foreign languages. Says Hoffa, who lectured in Finland as a Fulbright scholar in 1974–1975, student exchange is "more selfish and nationalistic than it used to be. In the past, we were using it to understand each other on equal terms.... Now the focus is more preprofessional." For example, an Indiana University program for students of apparel merchandising takes them to Taiwan and China to see the factories that make the clothes they will someday market. Is such a journey an experiment in international living—or a chance for future bosses to survey their potential workers?

Defenders of today's version of study abroad say the new dispensation comes at the demand of students. Says Kathleen Sideli, current chair of the U.S. students-abroad section of NAFSA, an organization for international educators, "The students themselves are saying, why should I be a French major? How is it going to help me?"

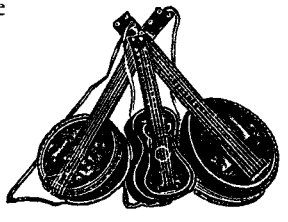
But critics wonder if U.S. study-abroad programs should do more to combat such attitudes. Rather than requiring students to fend for themselves in a foreign language and an unfamiliar place, many college-based programs insert familiar faces between students and direct overseas experience. Some programs, like St. Olaf's "Hemingway in Cuba" course, send faculty overseas to teach American courses in romantic settings. More common are hybrid programs like Stanford in Oxford, in which Stanford students live together and take special courses from a mix of U.S. and Oxford faculty.

Money is undoubtedly a factor in the burgeoning of some in-house foreign-study programs. It is not uncommon for

EVOLUTION NO. 9

GUITAR LEGEND JIMI HENDRIX DIED AT AGE TWENTY-SEVEN. That, evolutionarily speaking, is bad. But he had sex with hundreds of women and sired three children. That, evolutionarily speaking, is good. "Under ancestral conditions before birth control," speculates University College, London's Geoffrey Miller, "he would have fathered many more."

Miller thinks that evolutionary biologists have a great deal to learn from the Jimi Hendrix experience. In an essay in *The Origins of Music* (MIT), Miller contends that music (and dancing, its companion in every cultural venue but the bourgeois concert hall) is an audioterpsichorean version of the peacock's tail—a marker that young males have evolved to show off their fitness to young females. Like a hunter-gatherer in Pleistocene Africa, a London lad at an all-night rave can show that he has a brain capable of complex real-time signal processing, a neuromuscular system with sophisticated coordination, and the stamina needed for pursuing wounded kudu for hours through the brush.



In Miller's opinion, everything about music suggests that it has been shaped by the mechanism of sexual selection—that is, by competition for a mate rather than survival of the fittest. After all, despite its burdensome tax on brain power, musical ability is nearly universal, peaks during the mating years, and has throughout history been used to get chicks. Furthermore, according to Miller's extensive survey of jazz, rock, and classical performances, the age and sex profile for musicians (near thirty, far more likely to be male than female) almost exactly matches that for murderers. (Like music, murder helps eliminate the sexual competition.) To counter the objection that primitive music could not have been as sexy as rock because our ancestors lacked digital samplers and drum machines, Miller praises the simple power of the human voice. "Recall that the haunting yodels of American country singer Slim Whitman were sufficient, in Tim Burton's film *Mars Attacks*, to melt the brains of invading aliens," Miller writes. "I leave it as an exercise for the reader to imagine whether it could have melted the heart of an ovulating ancestor."

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Indiana University sends students overseas to visit the apparel factories they might one day manage.

schools to charge their ordinary tuition fee for the international programs they sponsor, even though educating kids abroad can be cheap. As Hubbs points out, it is not hard to do the math: "If students go to Costa Rica, and pay fifteen thousand dollars for a semester, and are staying with families or in a dorm, the college is not going to be paying out fifteen thousand dollars."

What, then, of the benefits that accrue to these roving bands of American students as they make their swift passage through the great wide world? Sideli stresses that some travel is better than none. "We don't have enough research to compare the short-term student with the long-term student," she says. "I would want to compare them with the person who doesn't go at all."

Not everybody, it's true, is going to have Flaubert's experience on finally encountering the East: "I have found, clearly delineated, everything that was hazy in my mind." But could anyone enjoy such an epiphany in one academic term? Or three weeks?

MARK GREIF

BAD ANTENNA

DO CELLULAR PHONES CAUSE cancer? Results are in from a six-year research program funded by the cell-phone industry. Most of the data suggest the answer is no. But a few findings do hint at a link—and, surprisingly, the scientist most concerned by the results is the one the industry hired.

Anxiety over cell phones and cancer first surfaced on January 21, 1993, when the Florida businessman David Reynard

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The cellular phone industry is unhappy with the scientist it hired to assess concerns about brain cancer.

announced on *Larry King Live* that he was suing the manufacturer of his wife's cell phone because he believed it had given her brain cancer. According to Reynard, an MRI showed her tumor to be "directly next to the antenna, and [it] seemed to be growing inward from that direction." The following week, cellular stocks plunged, and the industry panicked. Industry spokespeople claimed "thousands of studies" had proven cell phones safe, but in fact, no studies had been done. Fearing government regulation, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association decided to fund a major research effort.

The cell-phone association decided to establish an independent entity, Wireless Technology Research (WTR), which would be free from industry interference. They picked epidemiologist George Carlo to lead it. (In the early 1990s, Carlo had advised the Chlorine Institute in its attempt to allay the public's concerns about dioxin.) To safeguard WTR's scientific integrity, Harvard's Center for Risk Analysis coordinated an outside peer-review board.

There was an early glitch in 1996, when the industry halted funding for nine months after WTR announced that cell phones could interfere with pacemakers. Carlo claims he was required to sign a memorandum promising to limit WTR's work to brain cancer only.

Pacemakers aside, however, the arrangement worked. Carlo's group has brought in results that both damn and exonerate cell phones. One recent WTR-funded study has shown that radio frequency (RF) radiation can cause genetic damage to human cells. Raymond Tice, Graham Hook, and colleagues at Integrated Laboratory Systems in Durham, North Carolina, bombarded a set of blood cells with RF radiation and then performed a series of laboratory tests. All the tests were negative except one: A test for structural damage in chromosomes showed that the radiation had interfered with the cells' ability to repair their DNA. These findings, however, have not yet been published or independently replicated.

Other researchers have attempted to take a more big picture approach. At the Epidemiology Research Institute outside Boston, Kenneth Rothman and Nancy Dreyer hoped to use WTR funding to study the long-term effect of cell phones on humans outside the lab. Ambitiously, they intended to cross-reference the subscriber records of a million cell-phone users with the National Death Index, the federal government's database of the deceased. When cell-phone users died, the National Death Index would give the cause of death, while subscriber records would reveal the amount of time the deceased spent on the phone and whether the phone was handheld (antenna near the brain) or mounted on a car (antenna outside the vehicle). Unfortunately, Rothman and Dreyer were able to cross-reference only one year's worth of data before a lawyer in Chicago filed a lawsuit that blocked the researchers' access to records in the name of the subscribers' right to privacy. What the lawyer hopes to gain by holding up the scientific study is a mystery. Says Dreyer, "It is not clear to me that they are serving the interests of their clients."

Rothman and Dreyer recently reported on the limited data they were able to collect. Only six cell-phone users in the study died of brain cancer that year—too small a number from which to draw a conclusion. Nonetheless, WTR director Carlo points out that the rate of brain-cancer deaths among handheld phone users was greater than the rate for users with car-mounted phones. Rothman and Dreyer themselves did not find this small (and statistically insignificant) difference worthy of mention.

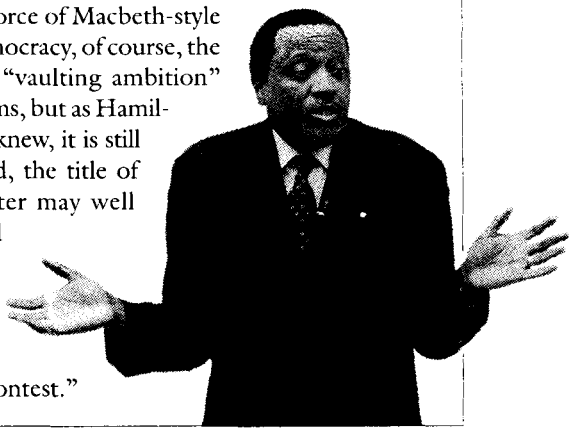
In another WTR-sponsored study, the epidemiologist Joshua Muscat of the American Health Foundation (a nonprofit organization that researches cancer prevention) interviewed brain-cancer patients about their cellular-phone use between 1993 and 1996. The results have been submitted for publication, so Muscat won't discuss them in

MACBETH: FOUNDING FATHER

IN HIS QUEST FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION, ALAN Keyes has courted the Christian right with enormous zeal—and little success. But if Keyes were to reconsider his strategy, he might reach out to another audience: the godless academy. After all, he is the only major-party presidential candidate to have a Ph.D. In 1979, Keyes received his doctorate from Harvard University for an examination of Alexander Hamilton's political philosophy titled "Ambition and Statesmanship."

In contrast to the populist fervor of Keyes's current campaign, his thesis follows the coolly elitist interpretation of the U.S. Constitution propounded by disciples of Leo Strauss. According to the Straussians, the Founding Fathers did not trust the people to rule. While the Constitution appeared to enshrine the principle of popular sovereignty, it also established antidemocratic mechanisms to ensure the continued predominance of the truly capable.

Provocatively enough, Keyes begins his thesis with a study of *Macbeth*, suggesting that the warrior's bloody usurpation of the throne of Scotland presages the revolt of the American colonists against the English king. A serious problem confronting any political order, Keyes argues, is to harness the force of Macbeth-style ambition. In a democracy, of course, the spectacle of such "vaulting ambition" takes different forms, but as Hamilton and his peers knew, it is still dangerous. Indeed, the title of Keyes's last chapter may well express the proud author-candidate's attitude toward his own political competitors: "Let Fools Contest."



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detail. He will say that "there does not seem to be a particular cancer hazard," though he believes further studies should be conducted.

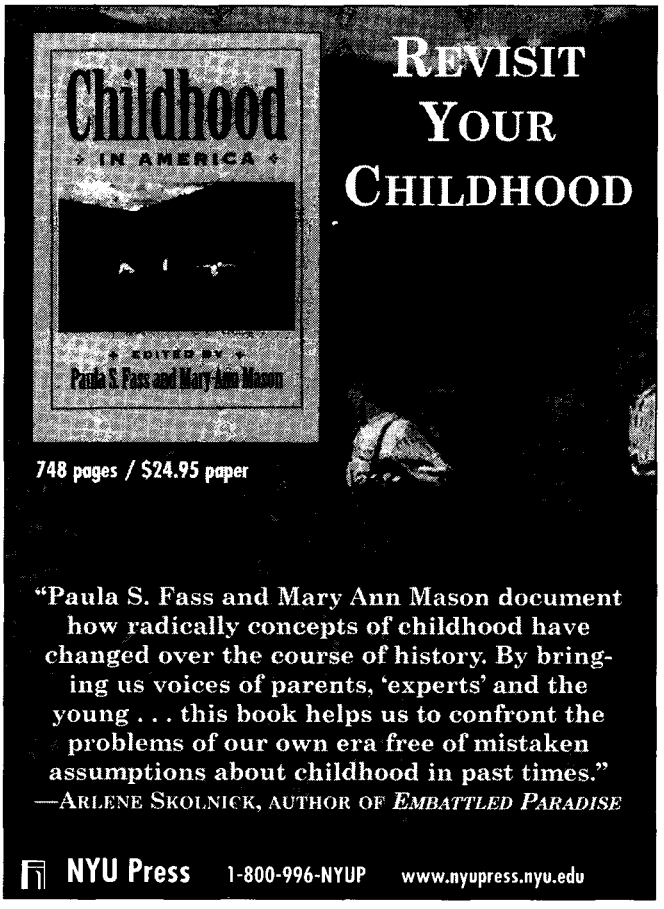
Again, the WTR's Carlo is more troubled by the researcher's data than the researcher is. "Most of those brain cancers were very far away from the antenna," Carlo warns. In other words, he believes that Muscat's chosen sample may have diluted the effect it was trying to measure by including brain cancers that could not have been caused by cell-phone use. Indeed, when Muscat narrowed his analysis to neuroepithelial tumors, which grow from the periphery of the brain inward, he did find a link. Carlo says that of the thirty-five patients with neuroepithelial tumors, eighteen used cell phones, which implies that for that kind of cancer alone, using a cell phone almost triples your risk. However, narrowing the focus to a particular cancer increases the danger of statistical cherry picking—of finding a positive correlation due only to chance. Muscat himself is cautious: "It's not a finding that deserves a lot of attention in supporting recommendations for the public."

"The FDA," says Carlo, "has made it clear that they're not going to do anything until they have a stack of bodies to count."

Carlo, however, insists there's enough evidence for action now. Although most studies to date have failed to link cell phones to cancer, he urges the industry to tell consumers about the "half-dozen studies that show problems." Last fall, Carlo sent out a letter to twenty-five telecommunications CEOs asking for help publicizing the results. But relations have clearly soured between the cellular phone industry and the man they once appointed. Industry leaders say they prefer to wait for more research; so do federal regulators. "The FDA," says Carlo, "has made it clear that they're not going to do anything until they have a stack of bodies to count." Results from other studies, under way at the National Cancer Institute and in Europe, are at least three years away.

In the meantime, Carlo is using his Health Risk Management Group, a private advisory group working out of a Washington, D.C., town house, to launch a consumer-education campaign. Although WTR's findings have not yet been published, Carlo has put together an information book for consumers and is talking to the media—including *20/20* (which has covered the story before) and *60 Minutes*. Although the risks of cell phones are still unknown, the fix Carlo proposes is simple: Use a headset to keep the phone's antenna away from your body. According to the cool-hunters at *The New York Times*, the space-age contraptions are already a hit with club goers.

MARK PARASCANDOLA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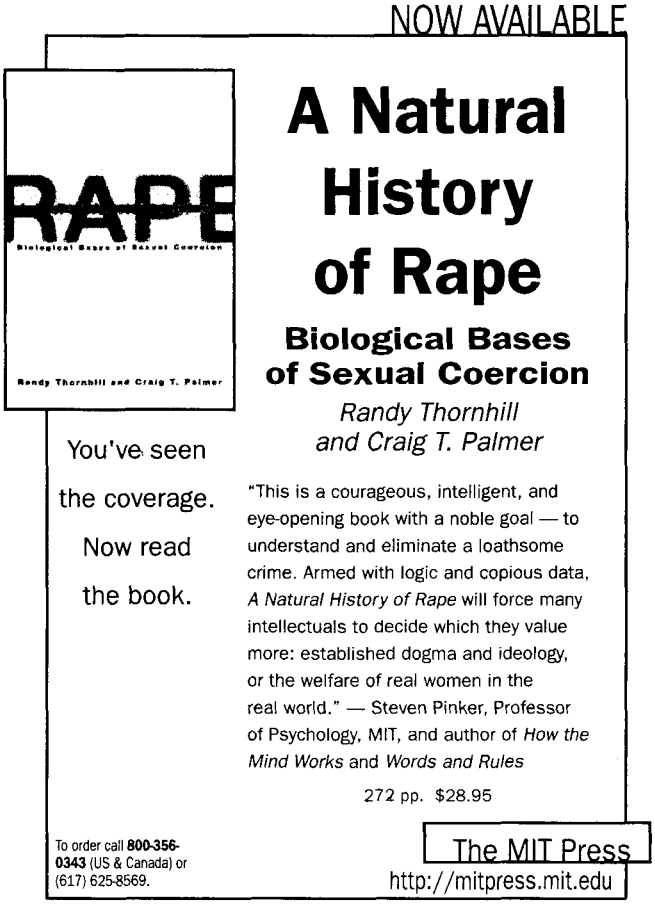
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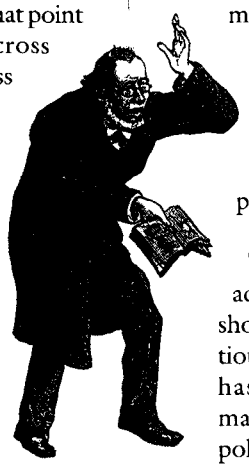
WITHOUT PEER

WHEN SCHOLARS HAVE exciting breakthroughs after years of drudgery, they might be excused for wanting to go public. But at what point does this desire cross over into shameless self-flackery? Does rushing to the news media, before peer review, constitute a breach of etiquette—or worse?



In the hard sciences, answers to these questions have been established by precedent. Martin Fleischmann and B. Stanley Pons incited a massive backlash in 1989, when they breathlessly announced the discovery of cold fusion at a press conference at the University of Utah. Fellow scientists, it seemed, were as offended by their appetite for P.R. as by their botched findings. In 1998 a British biologist announced on TV that he had discovered that genetically modified potatoes sabotaged the health and growth of rats. As it turned out, the potato results could not be replicated any more than the cold-fusion findings could. The editor of the British medical journal *The Lancet* proclaimed that in going to the press before peer review, this biologist "broke a fundamental scientific rule" and "was widely condemned by his colleagues."

Should the same fundamental rule be applied to the social sciences? In the December issue of *PS: Political Science and Politics,* a journal published by the American Political Science Association (APSA), education researcher Edward Muir makes the case that political scientists shouldn't go public until peers have had a crack at their data. Muir, an employee of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), adds that researchers should be doubly cautious when their work has the potential to make waves in public policy: In particular he takes aim at Harvard's Paul Peterson and the Manhattan Institute's Jay Greene, two political scientists who support voucher programs for public schools and who published their data in *The Wall Street Journal* before their findings ever appeared in a scholarly publication.

A controversial article insists that political scientists must not go public with their data before peer review.

Peterson and Greene's study assessed Milwaukee's pioneering school-choice program, which, starting in 1990, gave a limited number of low-income students private-school tuition vouchers worth roughly three thousand dollars each. In August 1996, Peterson and Greene summarized their findings in a *Journal* Op-Ed, concluding that after three to four years in the Milwaukee program, students' math and reading scores rose significantly. Voucher programs, Peterson and Greene wrote, could potentially "cut the gap between whites and minorities by one-half." Two weeks later, the researchers presented the paper at the APSA conference. By then, their study was everywhere. Newspaper editorials hailed it, Rush Limbaugh milked it, and Lamar Alexander discussed it on *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.* The results were well timed for a friendly reception: They appeared during the 1996 Republican convention.

In his dissenting article, Muir notes that although conservatives lauded the Peterson-

THUS JOKED ZARATHUSTRA

PHILOSOPHERS AREN'T FUNNY VERY OFTEN—ABOUT ONCE every hundred years. In 1901, the editors of the sober British philosophy journal *Mind* published a humor supplement. Now they've done it again.

Packaged with the January issue, *Mind! 2000* has spoof book reviews, bad doggerel, and fictitious job listings. "Ted Turner College (formerly Harvard University)" seeks to fill a position in philosophy. So does the "Hilary Putnam Centre for Twin-Earth Studies," a reference to the Harvard philosopher's thought experiment involving another planet nearly identical to our own. A proposal to amend traffic laws to "Go on gred" and "Stop on reen" alludes to Nelson Goodman's artificial, time-linked categories "grue" and "bleen."

Are today's philosophers funnier than their predecessors? Undecidable. Much like its contemporary cousin, the 1901 *Mind!* featured spoof book reviews, bad doggerel, and fictitious ads, as well as the occasional limerick in German ("Als berühmter Professor noch Hegel / Mit Begriffen oft spilte er Kegel," etc.). An author named I. Cant offered "Specimens of the *Critique of Pure Rot,*" and Ursus Spelaeus presented a prospectus for incorporating the oracle of Delphi—a sort of philosophical IPO ("It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the advice given by the Oracle will be GOOD"). The editors condescended to offer their American readers "A KEY TO MIND! With a FULL EXPLANATION of all the Jokes and Difficulties." A key would have helped. The humor intended by "*The Theory and Practice of Ignorance* by A. CRICHTON" is more penetrable if one knows that J.E. Creighton was the chair of philosophy at Cornell in the late 1800s, when *Mind!*'s editor tried (unsuccessfully) for a Ph.D. there.

But as *Mind!*'s mock Heraclitus warned, "Only the witless will try to winnow the wit from the chaff." For more wit and chaff, check out the University of Arizona philosopher David Chalmers's "Philosophical Humor" Web page (www.u.arizona.edu/~chalmers/phil-humor.html). There you can study "Causes of Death of Philosophers" (Descartes "stopped thinking"), try recipes from "The Jean-Paul Sartre Cookbook," and receive "Tech Support, Nietzsche Style."

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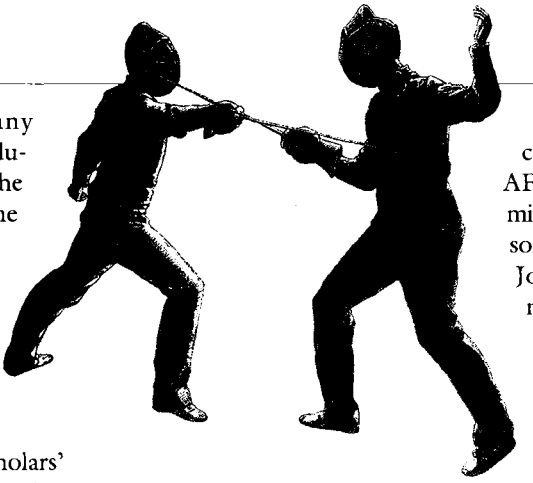
Greene findings, other scholars have since punched holes in them. John Witte of the University of Wisconsin at Madison—the official evaluator of the Milwaukee project—has found no change in reading or math scores for students in the program. Cecilia Rouse, a Princeton economist, found some improvement in math but none in reading. As these reviewers delivered their verdicts, tempers flared. In October 1996, *The Wall Street Journal* quoted Witte calling Peterson a "snake" and Peterson countering that Witte's work was "lousy." Finally, in 1998 and 1999, slightly modified versions of the study were published in peer-reviewed publications.

According to Muir, the voucher controversy is just the latest example of education research run amok. Politicians have implemented any number of dead-end educational reforms, from the "open classrooms" of the 1970s to the mainstreaming of special-ed kids, on the basis of preliminary data like the Peterson-Greene study. Of course, there is no way to regulate scholars' speech—nor should there be, Muir concedes—but he maintains that "moral suasion" is "perhaps our best tool" for encouraging restraint. Somewhat portentously, his piece concludes: "To present to the general public research that has not endured the scrutiny of peer review and whose statistical results have not been held to the standards established by the social scientific community...is a challenge to the very nature of our enterprise as a community of scholars and citizens."



If scholars withhold their findings, some worry, interest groups will dominate the public debate.

But is Muir's argument motivated by a disinterested concern for scholarly standards? Peterson and Greene, enraged by the *PS* piece, charge that Muir reserves his indignation for findings that run counter to his—and the AFT's—political commitments. After all, Peterson and Greene's critic John Witte issued five non-peer-reviewed reports on the Milwaukee plan between 1991 and 1995. The Peterson-Greene Op-Ed was a response to some of those papers. Moreover, the AFT condemned voucher programs in its own non-peer-reviewed report—to which Muir was a contributor.

Peterson adds that to enforce Muir's mandate, "you'd probably have to eliminate the

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American Political Science Association annual meeting." After all, the papers read at the conference are not peer reviewed and journalists invariably report on them. Peterson is currently working on a study of school choice programs in Washington, D.C., and Dayton, Ohio, and he plans to shoot out a press release as soon as his conclusions are ready. "I get phone calls from reporters all the time," he asserts. "If I didn't release these results, people would say, 'What's he hiding?'" Finally, Peterson insists that he has a lot of company in his conduct. For example, one of the most discussed social-science articles of recent years, Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone," which charts Americans' declining participation in social organizations, has never been published in a peer-reviewed journal. Peterson suggests that if scholars withhold their findings from the public, interest groups will dominate the debate.

For his part, Muir rejects Peterson's implication that his *PS* piece was inspired by loyalty to the AFT. True, he followed the voucher debate because of his job, but he independently noticed that he was listening to more and more papers at conferences that he'd already read about in *The New York Times*. The problem, he continues, has as much to do with a researcher's tone and intentions as with the actual release of data, and Peterson and Greene struck him as especially hungry for attention. "Social science is a process," Muir says. "In particular, when you use the rhetoric of science, it's wrong if you haven't put yourself through the process completely."

Evidently, some hard scientists agree. "Science can be very glitzy, and people do go to newspapers," says Judith P. Klinman, a professor of chemistry and molecular and cell biology at UC-Berkeley. "But respect within the enterprise goes to people who do publish their peer-reviewed material first. They don't go to *The New York Times* with their results."

CHRISTOPHER SHEA

BUT DID THEY HAVE PASHMINA?

DID ICE AGE WOMEN APPRECIATE FASHION? WHY YES, SAY three researchers in a forthcoming issue of *Current Anthropology*. Olga Soffer, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois, examined eighty textile impressions found on clay fragments in the Czech Republic. Together with colleagues, she concluded that the finest Ice Age weaves were comparable to "thin cotton and linenwear worn today." The early Europeans covered their heads with caps, belted their skirts, and banded their breasts; they even wore bracelets and necklaces.

Soffer, who did fashion promotion for Federated Department Stores before she became an academic, is particularly happy to "get our ancestors out of the smelly furs and hides" they are commonly believed to have worn. Twenty-five thousand years after the fact, it's not a moment too soon.

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Eric Gordy, assistant professor of sociology at Clark University and author of *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (Penn State, 1999).

"**Dubravka Ugresic**'s ***Culture of Lies: Antipolitical Essays*** (Penn State, 1998) is a trenchant, engaging, and direct exploration of the consequences of nationalist authoritarianism on everyday life and on the realm of ideas. More informally, the cartoonist **Aleksandar Zograf** (a pseudonym for Sasa Rakezic) has published his 'war diary'—with cartoons—in ***Bulletins From Serbia: E-mails and Cartoon Strips From Beyond the Front Line*** (Slab-o-Concrete, 1999). With extraordinary insight and irony, Zograf captures the experience of people who supported neither the Serbian regime nor its military adventures but were bombed nonetheless. The Central European University Press deserves tremendous credit for its translations of research by scholars from the region. The anthology by **Nebojsa Popov** and **Drinka Gojkovic**, ***The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis*** (CEU, 2000), chronicles the debates among antinationalist scholars in Serbia in the period up to and during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Croatian weekly *Feral Tribune* has also released an excellent series of monographs in the past few years."

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SARAJEVO

Tomislav Z. Longinovic, associate professor of Slavic and comparative literature and director of the Cultural Translation Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; author of *Borderline Culture* (Arkansas, 1993).

"**Maria Todorova,** in ***Imagining the Balkans*** (Oxford, 1997), introduces 'balkanism,' a supplement to Edward Said's 'orientalism,' to account for European and American perceptions of the region as the site of perpetual bloodshed and deeply rooted ethnic hatreds. The crucial role of interference by the so-called Great Powers is accorded its proper place in Balkan tragedies past and present. This is by far the best work of historiography on the region. ***Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*** (Brookings, 1995), by **Susan L. Woodward,** is a monumental study in both scope and volume. It provides crucial economic and political background to the Yugoslav wars, as well as an international-relations dimension that is sorely lacking in the work of journalistic 'instant experts.' According to Woodward, the key to understanding the tragedy in the Balkans is Yugoslavia's loss of strategic importance for the West after the end of the Cold War. Woodward analyzes the war's horrific events with admirable care and scholarly effort."

Stevan K. Pavlowitch, professor emeritus of history at the University of Southampton and author of *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and Its Problems, 1918–1988* (Ohio State, 1988) and *A History of the Balkans, 1804–1945* (Longman, 1999).

"**Vesna Goldsworthy's *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination*** (Yale, 1998) incisively analyzes Balkan archetypes in English-language literature and entertainment, exploring how Western taboos have been projected onto the region and how these representations have in turn affected the Balkans. **Simon Trew's *Britain, Mihailovic, and the Chetniks, 1941–42*** (Macmillan, 1998) is a useful and nonpartisan monograph that traces the development and deterioration of British support for the Serbian royalist movement in Axis-occupied Yugoslavia. Of more contemporary interest is ***South Eastern Europe 2000: A View From Serbia*** (Stubovi Kulture with European Movement Serbia, 1999), edited by **Jelica Minic.** Assessing the region's future, the contributors start with a realistic view of the potential for integration, reconstruction, and cross-border cooperation."

JULIA MITRIC

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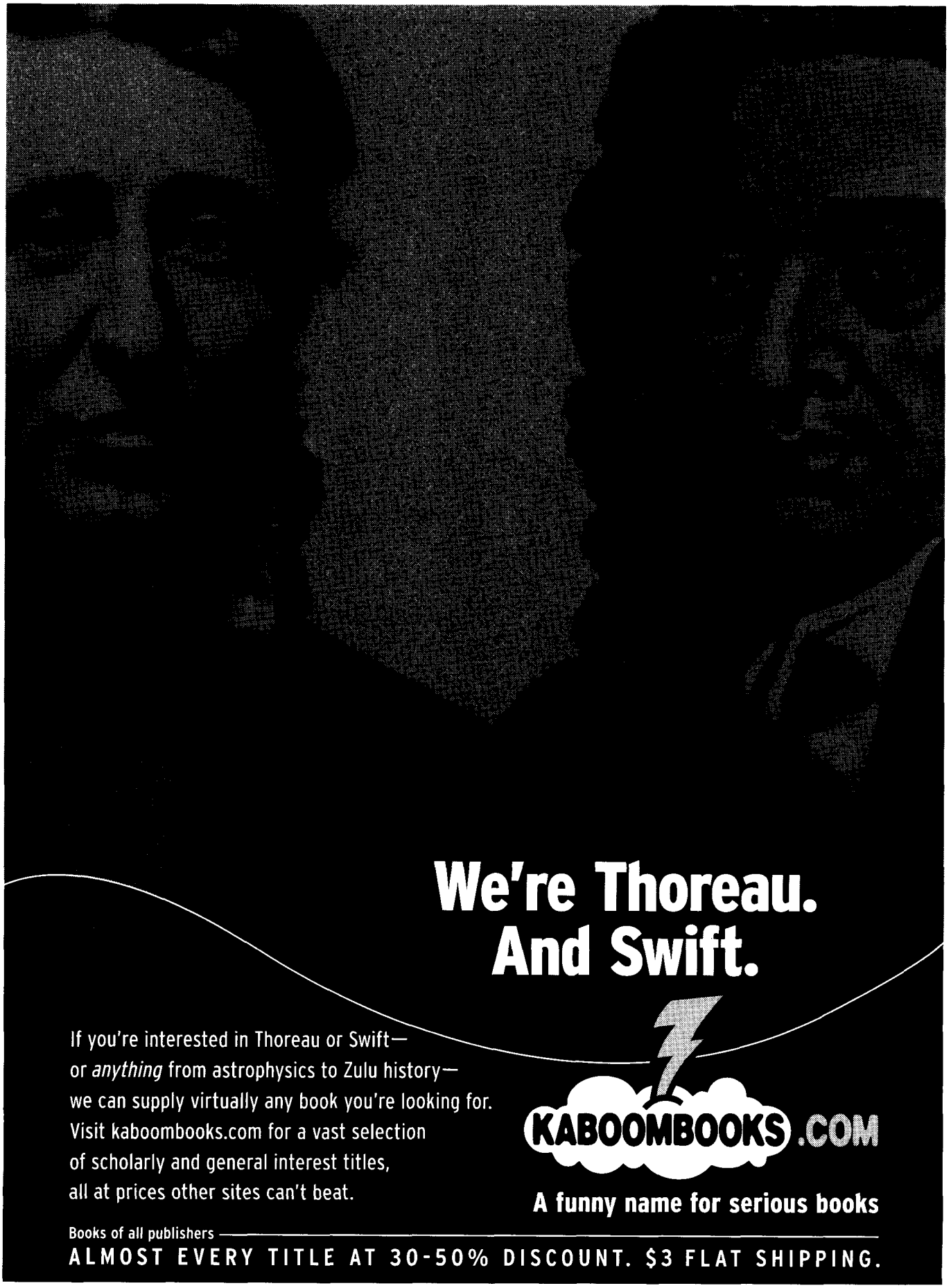

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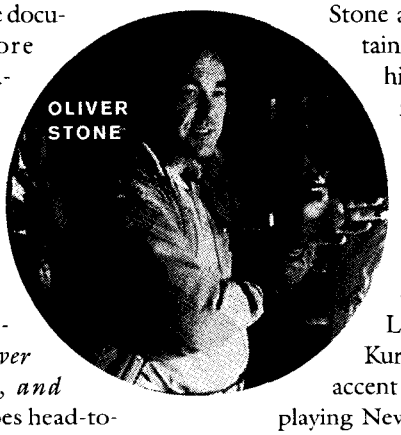
NATURAL BORN HISTORIAN

"I'VE NEVER CLAIMED TO BE A HISTORIAN," declares Oliver Stone, speaking from his car phone. "Remember that, it's very important." Well, okay, if he insists. But historians might be forgiven for wondering about the director's habit of treading on their academic turf. Not long before Stone filmed *JFK* (1991), he told the *Dallas Morning News* the film would be "a history lesson." The script for *Nixon* (1995) came with hundreds of footnotes. Indeed, these docudramas have provoked more historical debate than most academic historians manage in a lifetime—albeit by suggesting that the military-industrial complex killed Kennedy and that Nixon was a drunk.



Historians have frequently complained about Stone's trespasses. Next month, the nonhistorian strikes back. In *Oliver Stone's USA: Film, History, and Controversy* (Kansas), Stone goes head-to-head with scholarly critics such as Stephen Ambrose, Walter LaFeber, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. The book began when its editor, Robert Toplin of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, invited Stone to a 1997 American Historical Association panel on *Nixon*. "I won't say he was eager," says Toplin. "He expressed some concern about going into a packed room of historians, some of whom would be ready for an ambush." The academics, it turned out, were skeptical but sympathetic. Historian and former presidential candidate George McGovern found Stone's insights into Nixon's character "well conceived and grounded in reality." Arthur Schlesinger, a film critic as well as a historian, "noticed only one major error" in *Nixon*, which he thought pulled its punches. But he did take Stone to task for his conspiracy theorizing in *JFK*: "The impact of *JFK* on the unwary young, born long after the events and remote from the atmosphere of the time, should not be overrated. Too many seem to think that Stone is telling it as it was."

When Toplin suggested expanding the debate into a book covering the director's entire oeuvre, Stone agreed to write a preface. But once he read the essays Toplin had assembled—some of them sharply critical—he decided he had to respond in more detail. He went to work. "The book was killing me," says Stone. "It ended up taking up half my summer and most of my holiday."

So why do it? With typical bravado, Stone says he was "surprised by how wrong some of the facts were" in his critics' essays. "I just couldn't live with that without answering back, because these people are well respected." In the book, Stone assails his critics with an entertaining mix of bombast, insult, and historical detail. When Ambrose ridicules his "peacocklike display of...scholarship," Stone witheringly observes that the venerable historian "often celebrates martial figures, [but] has never served one day in combat." When Southeastern Louisiana University's Michael Kurtz complains about the southern accent used by Kevin Costner when playing New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison—an Iowa native—Stone sweetly notes that he, his co-writer, and Costner spent a fair amount of time with Garrison during the making of *JFK*, and none of them "ever detected anything other than an elegant southern drawl." And any historian objecting to Stone's argument that President Kennedy wanted out of Vietnam had better be prepared to argue with the director over the difference between National Security Memorandum 263 (written just before Kennedy's assassination) and National Security Memorandum 273 (written just after).

So what do historians think of Oliver Stone's movies? The films might not measure up to academic standards, Caltech's Robert Rosenstone argues in an early chapter, but they "engage the discourse of history and add something to that

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discourse." Rosenstone, who created the *American Historical Review*'s film section a decade ago and advised Warren Beatty during the making of *Reds* (1981), insists a film can convey historical truth even if it fictionalizes details. But is the result history? Rosenstone balks at the word, but he won't write historical film off as mere fiction either. He prefers to call it "an invention that somehow challenges or involves itself with historical discourse, and I don't have a word for that."

Ambrose is less accommodating about Stone's mix of fiction and history: "It's not allowed," he says. The author of multivolume biographies of Eisenhower and Nixon, Ambrose is no stranger to film. Steven Spielberg consulted him while making *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). But Ambrose gives *Nixon* two thumbs down, faulting the director for portraying the late president as a foulmouthed, pill-popping drunk guilty of trying to have Fidel Castro assassinated. None of these details are confirmed by the historical record, he argues, despite Stone's copious footnotes to the work of established scholars—including Ambrose. "I don't think that Hollywood finds truth that has been missed by the historian," Ambrose scoffs. "And I don't think that collapsing four characters into one is adding to our knowledge of what happened—it just doesn't work like that."

For better or worse, history and film cross paths more and more frequently. Professors regularly screen movies for their students, and collaboration between filmmakers and historians is becoming common. After all, as Bruno Ramirez observed last December in the *Journal of American History*, "filmic language has the power to bring the viewer as close as possible to experiencing the lost universe of the past." In her forthcoming book, *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision* (Harvard), Natalie Zemon Davis explores how films have depicted the resistance to slavery. Davis, who worked as a consultant for *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983), suggests that directors "can still be speculative and very imaginative" when they make historical films, but they should be "using their imagination in the *direction* of the evidence." And they must, she says, make the line between fact and speculation clear to their audiences.

Stone is dismissive of such advice. "What do they want—footnotes?" he laughs. "Do they want a closed caption that says 'This is dubious' or 'Please see endnotes for that'? What more can I do?" Film history, at least, seems to back him up: As legendary film producer Darryl Zanuck once declared, "There is nothing duller on the screen than being accurate but not dramatic."

PAUL MITCHINSON

"What do they want, footnotes?" gibes Oliver Stone.

***JFK* (1991)**

PHOTOFEST; BETTMAN/CORBIS

SEX, DEATH, AND THE CAMPUS NOVEL

IN 1987, THE PHILOSOPHER ROBERT PAUL Wolff reviewed Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* in the pages of *Academe*, the journal of the American Association of University Professors. In his review, Wolff articulated a radical thesis: Allan Bloom did not exist. *The Closing of the American Mind*, he argued, was in fact a novel written by Saul Bellow, whose warm introduction had helped put Bloom before the public eye. "What Bellow has done, quite simply," Wolff explained, "is to write an entire coruscatingly funny novel in the form of a pettish, bookish, grumpy, reactionary complaint against the last two decades. The 'author' of this tirade, one of Bellow's most fully realized literary creations, is a mid-fiftyish professor at the University of Chicago, to whom Bellow gives the evocative name, 'Bloom.'"

Whether or not Bloom was one of Bellow's fictional creations in 1987, he has certainly become one now. This April, Bellow's novel *Ravelstein* (Viking) arrives in the stores, and it relates the life and death of a brilliant professor who bears an unmistakable resemblance to the author of *The Closing of the American Mind*. Like Bloom, Ravelstein teaches at the University of Chicago and is the author of a controversial best-seller, a "spirited, intelligent, warlike book." In Hyde Park and in Paris, he pursues an extravagant life of intellectual adventure and erotic pleasure. Stricken with AIDS, he asks his novelist friend Chick to become his Boswell.

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Throughout the novel, Bellow offers an acid portrait of the University of Chicago faculty. We encounter Radu Grielescu, a polymath religion scholar who has "attached himself to the Nazis," and the eminent social scientist Rakhmiel Kogon, who "looked like a tyrant, with the tyranny baked into his face." If Bellow is unsparing in his portrayals of Mircea Eliade and Edward Shills, respectively, it seems he is merely following Bloom's example: "With a little encouragement Ravelstein would reveal...confidences.... He would say, quoting a late friend of ours, 'When I do it, it's not gossip, it's social history.'"

Bellow's U of C is only one of many campuses vying for the attention of our leading novelists. Sex, it turns out, is the common denominator. Earlier this year, the South African novelist J.M. Coetzee won the Booker Prize for his novel *Disgrace* (Viking), which details the plight of a classics-cum-communications professor named Lurie who loses his institutional post after he has an affair with a student and gives her a passing grade on an exam she missed. (At his trial, Lurie says simply, "I plead guilty to both charges. Pass sentence and let us get on with our lives.") Philip Roth's new novel *The Human Stain* (Houghton Mifflin) reveals the plight of Coleman Silk, an aging classics professor at a liberal arts college in Massachusetts. After being labeled a racist, Silk is forced into retirement, though that doesn't stop him from having a Viagra-intensified affair with a college janitor some thirty years his junior. Meanwhile, the small Vermont college featured in Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* (HarperCollins) is the scene of unusual pedagogical experiments. A creative writing class has to workshop a story about a drunk teenager who, after a bad date, goes home to sodomize a raw chicken. Professor and ex-novelist Ted Swenson successfully navigates the sexual-harassment hazards presented by the fictional chicken, only to impale himself on the talented, nose-ringed, orange- and-green-haired student Angela Argo, who knows how to write (and experience) sex scenes between humans.

There's still more to come. In 2001, Picador USA will publish James Hynes's *The Lecturer's Tale*. In this thriller by the author of *Publish and Perish*, a non-tenure-track instructor at a large Midwestern university loses a finger in an accident on Halloween and then discovers that his digit, once reattached, allows him to make other people do his bidding. He uses this mysterious power to recover his composition classes and his faculty housing. Then he retouches faculty politics. And if that's not scary enough, there is speculation that Tom Wolfe is planning a campus novel. Last spring the author of *A Man in Full* taught at Stanford's graduate journalism school, where he spent most of his time, according to the school's dean, doing on-site research. If Wolfe ever publishes a send-up of campus life, academics may well find it the most nettlesome account of their profession since, well, *The Closing of the American Mind*.

JOHN RAY JR.

Allan Bloom is fictional, after all.

DISCIPLINED AND PUBLISHED

THIS FEBRUARY, THE U.S. PRISON POPULATION reached two million—twice what it was ten years ago. And as the prisons fill up, debate over the penal system escalates. Politicians tout longer sentences; prisoners' rights activists deplore crumbling buildings; radio talk-show hosts protest that inmates are actually living the high life. On one thing, however, most parties agree: Whatever convicts are doing behind those walls—reforming or relapsing, forging license plates or watching television—it is doubtful they are poring over Nietzsche.

But wait! Thanks to Drew Leder, a philosophy professor at Loyola College in Baltimore, at least some prisoners do their time engrossed not only in Nietzsche but also in Plato, Simone Weil, and Michel Foucault. In the early 1990s, Leder taught a philosophy seminar to a small group of inmates at the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore. Now he has published *The Soul Has No Bars: Inmates Reflect on Life, Death, and Hope* (Rowman & Littlefield). For the most part, the book consists of slightly brushed-up transcripts of the prisoners' discussions. But Leder also offers an account of his own troubled family history. "The students really went the whole nine yards, being willing to have their

COURTESY ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD

DREW LEDER (FRONT ROW, SECOND FROM RIGHT) AND HIS CLASS

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Prisoners read excerpts from Martin Heidegger, Cornel West, Joseph Campbell, and Martin Buber.

words, records, identities on paper," says Leder. "Which is why I also tell my own life story."

The men featured in this book are convicts, most of whom are serving life (or double-life, or life-plus-something) sentences for serious crimes: H.B. Johnson Jr. is in for attempted murder and handgun possession, Arlando "Tray" Jones III for murder, Wayne Brown for rape. Leder depicts them as thoughtful and inquisitive students rather than as hardened criminals; many of them even have distinguished themselves during their sentences. H.B. is a playwright who has been honored by the PEN American Center and profiled on the NBC *Today* show. Tray, who has completed a B.A. in psychology while in prison, co-directs Project Turnaround, which brings problem kids to prison so they can see where crime leads. And Wayne, who insists on his innocence, has a theology degree and is studying to be a minister.

Leder himself came to the prison unexpectedly. He calls himself a "Jewish Quaker with Hindu beliefs in karma and reincarnation" who dabbles in Buddhist meditation and teaches at a Catholic school; as such, he believes in "utilizing all avenues to the sacred." It was at a Jesuit seminary and retreat center in Pennsylvania, Leder writes, that inspiration struck: "In meditation...I envisioned prison as an ideal place for philosophical work. Though the body is trapped, the spirit, I imagined, could roam freely through the realm of ideas."

Accordingly, he assigned readings that dealt with "being in a zone of imprisonment and finding freedom." Prisoners approached this theme chronologically via ancient Greek philosophy, Hindu and Buddhist scripture, and concentration-camp literature, as well as contemporary philosophy. It was only "when we were rather far along" that he decided to begin tape-recording class sessions. Thus the transcripts he offers in the book focus on twentieth-century authors and their considerations of power and architecture, space and time, sex and race. Students tackled excerpts from Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Cornel West's *Race Matters*, Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, and Martin Buber's *The Way of Man According to the Teaching of Hasidism*. (Their discussion of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* appeared in *Lingua Franca* in 1993.) In some ways, Leder notes in his introduction, the inmates were better students than those he teaches in the free world: "The convicts cared about ideas, more than many of my Loyola College students sentenced to serve out their required curriculum."

To be sure, Leder encouraged his incarcerated

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students to take more than an academic interest in philosophy. Like his colleagues in the burgeoning philosophical therapy business, he wished to provoke conversations about how philosophical texts illuminate one's life. In one session, Leder asked students to reflect on the German philosopher O.F. Bellnow's notion that man "needs a firm dwelling place if he is not to be dragged along helplessly by the stream of time." Tray says that he carries his own posessions with him around the jail because "*I'm the cell,* my own body, rather than some whole cut out of space."

In a chapter called "Hooked on Power," inmates reflect on life before prison. To begin, they read an aphorism from Nietzsche's *Daybreak:* "Not necessity, not desire—no, the love of power is the demon of men. [He enjoys]...success not inasmuch as he has given joy to the next man or elevated or cheered him, but inasmuch as he has *impressed* himself on the soul of the other, changed its shape and rules over it at his own sweet will."

After explicating the text, Leder asked: "Were the criminal activities that you personally engaged in motivated by the will to power?" Tray answered: "In the drug game I was able to fulfill all the elements that Nietzsche talked about. If my little sister wanted a pair of new shoes for school I could get it for her and it made me feel powerful. And then I was able to destroy people if I didn't like them.... [But] after the first week I was able to buy what I wanted, so it was no longer the money. It was being able to bestow, mock, and destroy." H.B. described power's relationship to drugs: "I don't think that anyone who has ever sold drugs, who has turned people on with the intent to get them hooked, was not on a quest for power. And I don't think that anybody who's ever used drugs was not on a quest for power too—the power of independence, self-realization, joy."

As a result of his time at the Pen, Leder has become a crusader for higher education in prisons nationwide. "You have a high rate of illiteracy in prisons, a high rate of mental illness and substance abuse. We offer very little in the way of rehabilitation for our prisoners," says Leder. He notes that several university extension programs for inmates have recently been shut down and that Pell grants are no longer available to the incarcerated. "These men will eventually get out of prison. They will need a tool to make their voices heard and to exercise power and agency in a way that isn't so destructive," says Leder. "You can't just freeze them away."

HILLARY FREY

H.B. JOHNSON

"In the drug game I was able to fulfill all the elements that Nietzsche talked about," says one inmate.

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Planet of the Reptiles

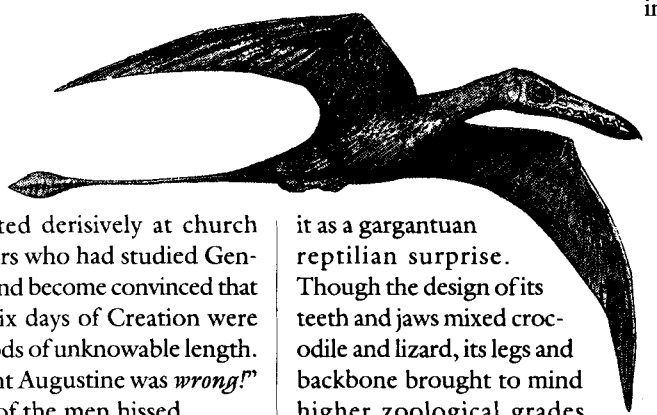
BY ROBERT T. BAKKER

Marsh's Dinosaurs
Edited by John H. Ostrom
and John S. McIntosh
Yale University Press
416 pp • $85.00

A FEW MONTHS AGO, ON Denver public television, two fire-breathing creationists debated several of us scientists and historians. The gentlemen sneered at modern laboratory genetics, mocked carbon dating, and dismissed all *Australopithecus* specimens as tall chimps killed by Noah's flood. They even snorted derisively at church fathers who had studied Genesis and become convinced that the six days of Creation were periods of unknowable length. "Saint Augustine was *wrong!*" one of the men hissed.

But when I popped open a cigar box and drew out a fossil tooth from the huge carvnivorous dinosaur *Allosaurus,* the pair of stratigraphic debunkers grew silent. They knew that *Homo sapiens,* especially in the juvenile stages, love dinosaurs. They knew that thousands of parents listen to their fourth-graders correct them on fine points of dino history: "No, Mom. *Allosaurus* didn't live with *T. rex. Rex* came millions of years later, in the Cretaceous period. Our human ancestors were little twitchy-nosed fur balls back then." Simply put, know-nothing creationists are scared of dinosaurs.

Jurassic bones have been silencing geo-Luddites since the spring of 1817, when a roofing-slate quarry at Stonesfield, near Oxford University, yielded two lots of fossils. One lot preserved jaws, hips, and a torso from *Megalosaurus,* a predator that was in life as heavy as an elephant. *Megalosaurus* was the first anatomically adequate dinosaur specimen known. The Reverend William Buckland, arguably the greatest Jurassic scholar of all time, described it as a gargantuan reptilian surprise. Though the design of its teeth and jaws mixed crocodile and lizard, its legs and backbone brought to mind higher zoological grades. They resembled the legs and spines of hot-blooded mammals (such as rhinos and bears) and giant birds (such as ostriches). Buckland's protégé, Richard Owen, argued that the Dinosauria were the most sophisticated physiological adaptation ever produced within the class Reptilia.



The second lot of Stonesfield fossils were three mouse-sized jaws armed with prickly, high-cusped teeth. Buckland and Owen recognized that the minimolared fossils were members of our own class, the warm-blooded Mammalia. These mammals were at a lowly grade of organization—simpler and stupider than even a Virginia possum.

Buckland and Owen offered two alternative explanations for the humble status of us mammals in Jurassic times. Explanation A: The hot and steamy Jurassic atmosphere was unsuitable for high-class mammals, whose brains are large and delicate. Explanation B: God elected to put the highest form of reptile, the hot-blooded dinosaur, in the Jurassic period, and early mammals could only survive by being small and inconspicuous.

Many Victorian biologists had trouble accepting that Jurassic mammals were uniformly diminutive. That is because they resisted the idea of biological progress—the notion that while some species become extinct, those who survive might progress from lower to higher forms. Anti-progressionists, led by Charles Lyell, argued that Stonesfield was a misleading sample. They insisted that big, smart Mammalia—cows, elephants, maybe even humans—had been cavorting elsewhere in Jurassic days, in spots not recorded by the fossilization process. Those who distrusted the available evidence had their own refrain: "The fossil record is mostly gaps in time and space." Darwin himself was deeply embarrassed by the gappiness of the record. Lyellians envisioned a steady-state earth where high mammals had always coexisted with low. As long as Jurassic bones consisted of fragmentary skeletons dug here and there in England and France, the steady-state view was defensible.

It became indefensible in 1877, with the discovery of

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bone-rich layers of sediment at Como Bluff—a windy, red-blotched ring of low hills on Wyoming's High Plains—and in nearby Colorado. Railroad cars carried freshly uncovered skeletons back to New Haven, where Professor Othniel Charles Marsh directed a laboratory a hundred times bigger than Buckland's. Yale lab benches strained under the load of a hundred brontosaurs and dozens of giant predators—many species represented by near-complete skeletons—plus dozens of mammal jaws. For the first time, scholars and the public alike could see the full-body profile of long-necked Jurassic brontosaurs, plated stegosaurs, and snaggle-jawed predators.

MARSH WAS ONE OF the earliest bone diggers to convert wholeheartedly to Darwinism. He coined Marsh's law, which states that since bigger brains confer adaptive advantages, brain size increases as a species evolves. The average mammal today is brainier than its ancient ancestors. Jurassic mammals were dumb, Marsh explained, because they had only recently evolved from reptiles.

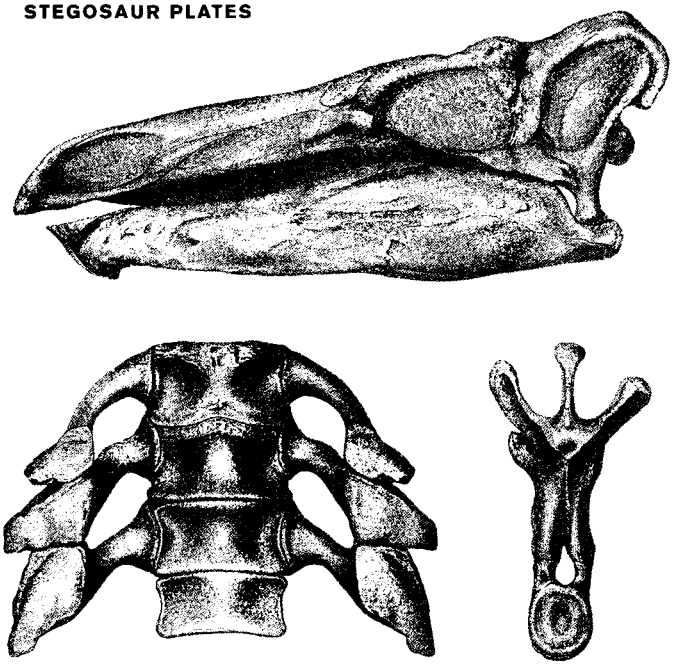
Marsh's Wyoming fossils offered compelling evidence of evolution at work in mammal history. In molar structure and jaw architecture, the Como mammals from the late Jurassic were distinctly more advanced than the Stonesfield critters, which dated from the middle Jurassic. Nonetheless, all Como mammals were still tiny—implying that the dinosaurian overlords maintained an adaptive superiority. In fact, as further discoveries by Marsh showed, dino domination continued into the next period, the Cretaceous, the era of the three-horned vegetarian *Triceratops*. Not until the last dino died did mammals begin to evolve larger body sizes.

Marsh's spectacular discoveries had an especially wide impact on popular culture because of the superb quality of the anatomic art that was created to illustrate his fossils. Underwritten by his own personal fortune, plus generous wads of taxpayers' cash transmitted via the U.S. Geological Survey, hundreds of lithographic plates were prepared at New Haven. Woodcuts in smaller format supplemented the folio-sized lithos.

But, strange to relate, the richest lode of Marsh lithos, illustrating the Como dinosaur menagerie, remained largely unpublished at his death in 1899. Perhaps the amount of text demanded by such luxurious illustrations daunted the Yale professor. Whatever the cause, these hundreds of bone images were inaccessible to scholars and dinophilic public alike for more than a half century.

I remember vividly when Yale University Press first issued *Marsh's Dinosaurs,* the long-delayed publication of most of the Como lithographs, in 1966. I was a Yale undergrad, doing a senior thesis on Como dino legs. I had been converted to Buckland and Owen's belief that dinos were high class in limb architecture, the near equal of rhinos, elephants, and ostriches. But my research was hampered by the sheer size of the petrified objects: It's extremely difficult to lay out a brontosaur shoulder joint and make an accurate diagram free from parallax. The human eye distorts such a monstrous shape, because we're too close to the bone. Unaided, our vision can't make an "ortho-projection," an image on paper of the true bone geometry.

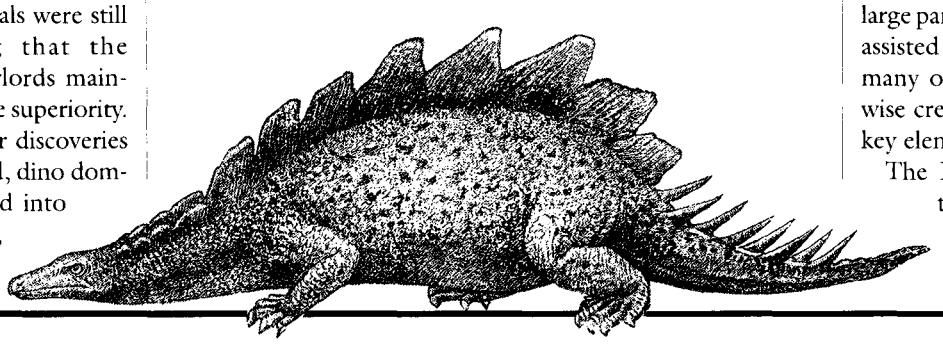
STEGOSAUR PLATES



It's extremely difficult to draw a dinosaur joint accurately. The human eye distorts such a monstrous shape because we're too close to the bone.

Marsh's Dinosaurs provided the solution. Every lithograph was an ortho-projection. Every drawing had been executed by anatomic illustrators who employed proportional dividers to locate all the landmarks on the bone surface. Bones were shown in three, four, or even six views: top, bottom, front, back, sides. So detailed were the lithos that I could identify the marks left on the bones by their attachments to muscles, joint cartilage, and ligaments. So accurate were the lithos that I could perform mechanical analyses that combined images of hip sockets with those of upper thighs. The first dozen papers I published in technical journals, plus my first book, *Dinosaur Heresies,* came in large part out of investigations assisted by Marsh's lithos, and many of my colleagues likewise credit the lithographs as key elements in their work.

The 1966 book was more than a dinosaur biomechanical atlas. Ostrom and McIn-



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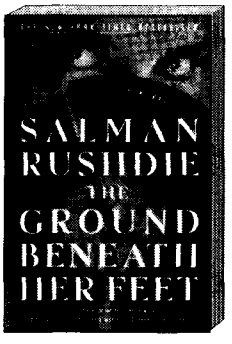

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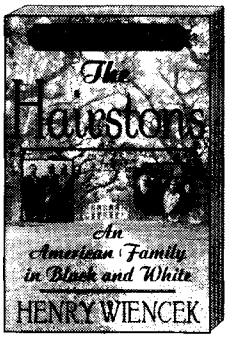

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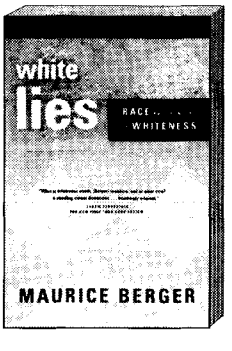

A native of the racially charged New York of the '60s, Berger is an articulate and passionate observer of race relations. Here he brings a keen, unique sensibility to the manifestations of blackness and whiteness in everyday life, debunking our myths and false assumptions about race in America.

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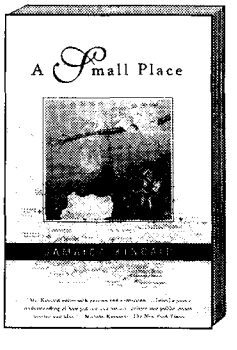
by Jamaica Kincaid



Recently reissued, Kincaid's classic essay about colonialism and its discontents focuses on Antigua, the 10-by-12-mile island in the British West Indies where she grew up.

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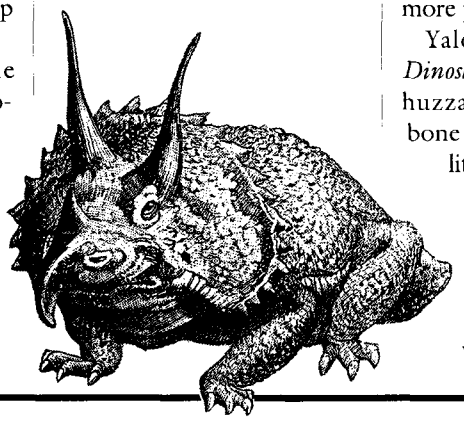
tosh provided the first reliable account of where in the strata each Marsh quarry had been dug; Marsh himself had been deliberately vague. In 1974, when I wrote my very first grant request, I proposed to take these data and go back to Como to study the evidence of habitat preserved in the rocks at each dino quarry. Supported by the Dinamation International Society, I've dug at Como nearly every summer since then, always with photocopies of *Marsh's Dinosaurs* folded up in my backpack.

Contrary to what the extreme creationists say, evolutionary paleontology is a predictive science. On average, higher beds should contain more advanced species than lower beds. And so it is at Como. We've found a new mammal jaw bed, just a wee bit higher in the strata than where Marsh dug in 1879. Our new mammal layer—now known as the Breakfast Bench Fauna—contains several mammals whose molars are a marked improvement over those of their earlier Como relatives. More evidence for Darwinism comes from the dinosaurs themselves. Marsh's men dug all their best *Brontosauri* from high in the late Jurassic layers. My crew has exhumed bronto skeletons from lower beds, and in the contours of the shoulder blade, these *Eobrontosauri* are distinctly more primitive.

> Buckland and Owen believed that dinos were high class in limb architecture, the near equal of rhinos and elephants.



Yale's reissue of *Marsh's Dinosaurs* is greeted by loud huzzahs from us Wyoming bone diggers. Those superb lithographs don't photocopy clearly, and now, at last, professional paleontologists can get the plates printing-press fresh. But I want something more: I want Yale University Press to be deluged with orders from fourth-grade teachers, parents, dinophilic kids, and all folks concerned about science teaching in public schools. The dinosaur lithographs are immensely pleasing to the eye, so the book makes a fine coffee-table accessory. And after just a little study of the bone anatomy contained therein, any literate adult can take *Marsh's Dinosaurs*, march into the school-board meeting, and face down creationists. The dinosaurs of Como Bluff are so awesome that they win converts even among evolution's skeptics.

Robert T. Bakker is dinosaur curator at the Graves Museum in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and distinguished research professor at Florida Atlantic University. His most recent book is the novel *Raptor Red* (Bantam).

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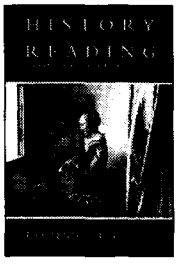

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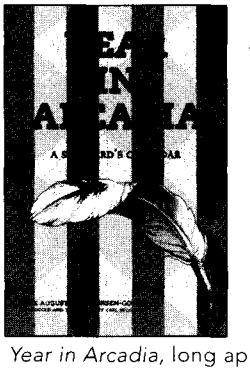

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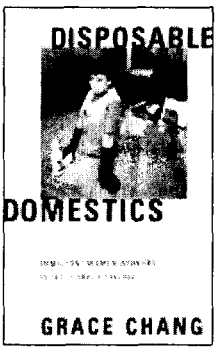

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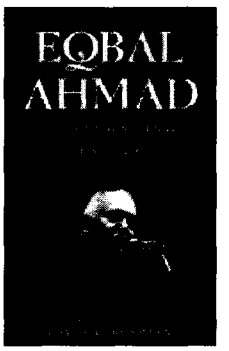

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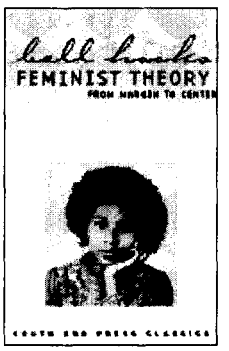

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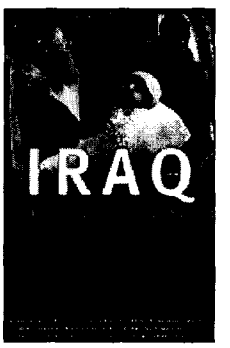

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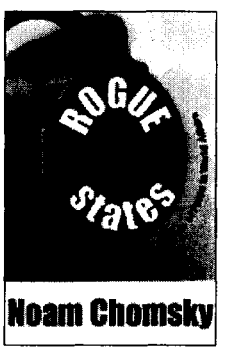

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She's Got Mail

BY FRANCINE PROSE

IN HER REMARKABLY astute and compassionate 1932 essay on Charlotte Brontë, the British writer Rebecca West argued that Brontë's novels could have been better. She could have made more efficient use of her literary gifts, West argued, were it not for the distractions and pressures occasioned by her ailing, impecunious siblings. The essay is poignant because one suspects that West's sympathy had roots in her own experience—a suspicion confirmed by the newly published *Selected Letters of Rebecca West*, edited by Bonnie Kime Scott. As the letters show, West's long life was so crammed with event and travel, family and health problems, romantic dissatisfactions and worries about making a living that it seems a miracle of talent, industry, and sheer determination that she was so prolific and productive—that she wrote as much and as fluently as she did.

Scott has judiciously culled more than two hundred letters from the ten thousand or so West wrote to friends, relatives, editors, and fellow writers. They are grouped in sections corresponding to the major periods in West's life, with a brief preface heading each division. When the book begins, fourteen-year-old Cicily Isabel Fairfield, already a prodigy of clarity and self-assurance, is addressing the editors of the *Scotsman* on the subject of women's rights. Within four years, she has renamed herself (after an Ibsen character) and gone to London to write for *The Freewoman* and to teach at a Fabian Society school. Letters chart

REBECCA WEST, 1930

the progress of her extramarital affair with H.G. Wells from its hopeful inception ("I found him one of the most interesting men I have ever met"), through a stormy period of adjustment, to the precipitous decline accelerated by the birth of their son, Anthony, and finally into the slough of discord and grievance in which the unhappy couple flailed for a miserable decade: "He demanded from me rather more than a husband usually demands in the way of continual help and care, he would give me only the barest amount of money, he prevented me from doing much work...he was extremely bad-tempered and cruel in case of illness or any difficulty arising out of our illegal relationship, and, above all, he was jealous and hostile to my son."

DISPATCHES FROM YUGOslavia provide quick snapshots of the scenes that West would paint in elaborate and luminous detail in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, while other letters furnish footnotes to the journalistic essays she wrote from South Africa, the United States, and Nuremberg, where she was sent to cover the Nazi war-crimes tribunals. Growing older, she writes from Ibstone, the country estate she shared with her husband, Henry Andrews (a banker whom Virginia Woolf called, somewhat uncharitably, "such dead, though excellent, mutton"), and later from London, where she lived after her husband's death and until her own, at the age of ninety-one.

The letters offer few revelations that can't be found in Victoria Glendinning's *Rebecca West: A Life* and in Anthony West's understandably more partial biography of his father. Those who can never get enough personal information may enjoy watching Dame Rebecca squirm as she struggles to explain to Anthony that he was sent away to school not at the age of two, as he believes, but at the age of three, and for good reasons having to do with his physical safety during Germany's bombardment of the British coast, near which they were living. As is well known, West's relationship with her son was a nightmare; his lifelong resentment surfaced in his novel, *Heritage*, which featured, at its center, a recklessly self-absorbed and unreliable mother. West's response to the book's publication was pained, as were her efforts to convince Anthony that she did not prevent him from seeing his father and did not cheat him out of his inheritance. One's sense of West's innocence is somewhat

Selected Letters of Rebecca West
Edited by Bonnie Kime Scott
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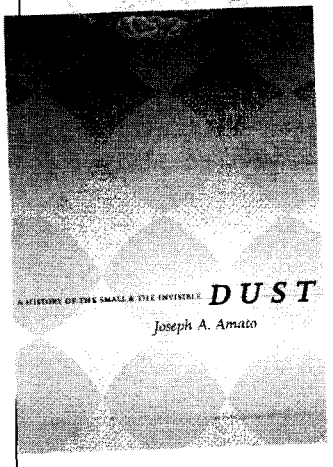
–Dorothy Parker

"I will show you fear in a handful of dust."
–T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*



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undermined when she reacts with rage to Anthony's description of his own son as "not an exciting boy." Something truly awful percolates to the surface: "When I think of the hell Anthony made of our lives when he was that age, with continual tale-bearing, extravagance, hysteria, and lying, I can't think how he has the nerve to speak like that of his admirable son."

For West's admirers, some of this can be fairly hard going—the casual anti-Semitism and homophobia, the gleeful relish with which, as the years go by, she strips off the gloves to slap around both the guilty and the innocent. In a letter to Ingrid Bergman, West breaks the bad news about the director Roberto Rossellini: "You may love your husband very much, but you should face the fact that he has no talent." It's disturbing, as well, to confront her bitterly disappointed assessments of her romantic career and of her long, problematic marriage to a man who refused to sleep with her and chased nearly every woman he met: "You say 'this has been a bad experience.' But it's been more than that. It's been a bad life; and the only one I have."

The consolation is the opportunity to experience her forceful and bracing opinions. She adored Dostoyevsky and hated Tolstoy, despised Sinclair Lewis and Henry Miller, had nothing but contempt for the slowness and sexlessness of Americans, and entertained mixed feelings about *The New Yorker*: "I cannot think that it serves a magazine when it publishes articles so long that you have to cut off the telephone, leave the milk bottles outside the front door to fool the neighbours, if you are to get a chance to read them." She was generous to fellow writers—women writers, in particular—and as she outlived nearly all of her friends, she devoted a certain amount of energy to defending their reputations after they could no longer speak for themselves. "It seems to me that it would be dangerous to consider Elinor Wylie without taking into account the extraordinary spitefulness of the age in which she lived.... Twice it happened to me that I was at a party with Elinor where she was gay and funny and brilliant, and that a few nights later I went to a cocktail party where people who had not been at that party described the ludicrous remarks Elinor had made at it and what a nuisance she had been." In an especially moving tribute to her dear friend Dorothy Thompson, West wrote to correct what she considered a demeaning newspaper obituary: "There was no pathos in her end. If fame had left her, it was because she had put it out in the ash-can."

MORE SATISFYING STILL is the fresh chance this new volume offers to hear West's voice—witty, arch, wise, acerbic, graceful. She was one of the great masters of the English prose sentence, and her letters are filled with the incisive, beautifully cadenced, and frequently hilarious descriptions of characters and places that give her work such resonance and power. Among the book's most wicked and delightful passages is this account of a talk delivered by the editor Frank Harris:

> His manner was foully offensive: a barking arrogance with oily declensions at the points where he was moved to speak of the necessity of the artist to feel pity and love—awful passages as though the Sermon on the

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REBECCA WEST, 1960

"You may love your husband very much," West wrote to Ingrid Bergman, "but you should face the fact that he has no talent."

Mount had kittened, and there were its progeny. But the thing that really horrified me was that his lecture consisted entirely of a criticism of an incident in *Madame Bovary* which that book does not contain. He had invented it. There is nothing in any of Flaubert's books remotely resembling it. I sat there with the intense solemnity of eighteen, horrified by this charlatan: and even more horrified by the way that not a soul in the room—and it was full of writers...had detected him. So this, I thought, was London. I picked up some consolation from the reflection that if London was such a mug I ought to be able to get some sort of income out of it.

It's striking how rarely (rarely, that is, in comparison with the correspondence of other writers—Flaubert, Elizabeth Bishop, and Flannery O'Connor, for example) her letters talk about the process of writing. When West complains to Janet Flanner that "Telling the truth is really a very difficult job indeed," she is referring to political rather than literary exigencies. Writing, it seems, came more easily and naturally to her than dealing with the difficulties associated with writing: deadlines, editors, assignments, money, the libel suit threatened by Evelyn Waugh, and the libel suit actually brought by a South African judge whom West misidentified in a piece on apartheid. Scott's notes might have offered the reader more help in disentangling this peculiar plot, and her prefaces also could have done more to explain the nature of West's anticommunism, confused by some readers—among them Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who later became a friend—with support for McCarthyism, which in fact she deplored.

In a letter (quoted by Glendinning but not included in this volume) to the Elizabethan scholar A.L. Rowse, West wrote, "I have never been able to write with anything more than the left hand of my mind; the right hand has always been engaged in something to do with personal relationships." It is at once a complaint about the obstacles that West faced and a (perhaps unwitting) boast about her success in overcoming them. Like the rest of her work, these selected letters attest to the heights that a one-handed writer—whether West or Charlotte Brontë—is able to reach.

Francine Prose is a fellow at the New York Public Library's Center for Scholars and Writers. Her new novel is *Blue Angel* (HarperCollins).

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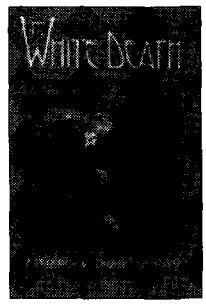

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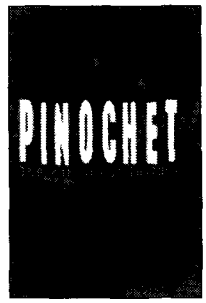

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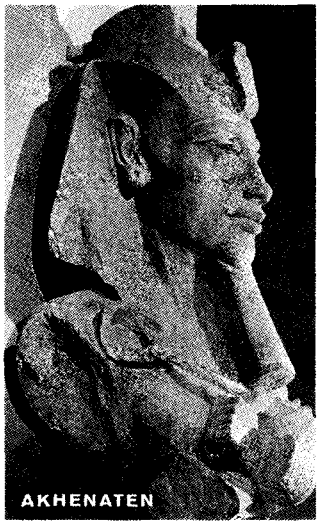
IN NOVEMBER 1828, JEAN-François Champollion, the founder of Egyptology, arrived at a run-down village on the Nile called Tell el-Amarna. The nearby sites of Beni Hasan and Hermopolis were much better known; but as Champollion was aware, the scholars of Napoleon's expedition had uncovered some curious relics at Amarna a few years earlier. These included boundary stelae for what appeared to be a considerable city of Middle Egypt. With no idea whom he might be describing, Champollion made swift notes about an extremely odd-looking Pharaoh depicted on the stelae. "King very fat and swollen," he wrote, "big belly. Feminine contours...*grande morbidezza* [great softness]." This king had a grotesquely elongated chin and neck, an egglike head, and long, rubbery fingers straight out of an Italian Mannerist painting. Was it a man or a woman? Champollion was not at all sure. Later, in 1843, Karl Richard Lepsius, an early scholar of the Amarna site, was similarly puzzled.

In fact, without knowing it, Champollion had stumbled upon perhaps the strangest figure in Egyptian history: the physically deformed (or artistically exaggerated) heretic Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, later self-baptized as Akhenaten. And the city marked by these intriguing stelae was none other than his remote capital. Ruling for a mere sixteen years in the middle of the fourteenth century B.C., at the height of the fabulous and decadent Eighteenth Dynasty, Akhenaten was the greatest iconoclast Egypt had ever known. Banishing the ancient top god Atum and his dizzying pantheon of lesser divinities, he set up the world's first monotheistic religion—the cult of Aten, or the sun-disc. The king designated a brand-new capital, far from either of Egypt's traditional capitals at Luxor and Memphis, devoted to this new religion. Such was the gravity of this revolution that later


AKHENATEN

Pharaohs tried ferociously to eradicate all trace of Akhenaten's memory. And they succeeded surprisingly well.

Today, however, Akhenaten is fully resurrected. Since the German archaeologist Arthur Weigall published his groundbreaking *Life and Times of Akhenaton* in 1910, he has been hailed as everything from the precursor of Moses and monotheism (courtesy of Freud) to the first modern individual. Even Thomas Mann fell under his spell in *Joseph and His Brothers.*

But Akhenaten's fame has another dimension. After all, he was married to one of history's most glamorous queens, Nefertiti. During their brief reign, they were the John and Jackie Kennedy of the ancient world. Nefertiti's limestone bust, which a German team discovered in the abandoned Amarna workshops of the royal sculptor Thuthmosis in 1912, has made her Egypt's most recognizable face. Since it was first exhibited in Berlin in 1924, this palely haughty, cruelly serene aristocratic portrait—"exalted, harsh, and alien," as Camille Paglia puts it—has become an archetype of sophisticated beauty. Fey comparisons with Audrey Hepburn have come thick and fast. Hitler loved it so much he refused to give it back to Egypt.

In *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light,* Erik Hornung, professor emeritus of Egyptology at the University of Basel, explores the metaphysical and religious dimensions of Akhenaten's "perestroika." Meanwhile, Joyce Tyldesley, an honorary research fellow at Liverpool University, burrows into the myths of Nefertiti in *Nefertiti, Egypt's Sun Queen.* Inevitably, their subject matters overlap. Nefertiti, unusually for an Egyptian queen, played a crucial role in Akhenaten's rule. She is frequently shown alongside her husband at nearly equal height (a noteworthy breaking of artistic rules). And, even more unusually, she participates in ritual "smiting scenes," which show the Pharaoh calmly lopping off the heads of assorted miserable Asiatics and Nubians. Like the female Pharaoh Hatchepsut who preceded her (and whom Tyldesley has also writ-

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ten about), Nefertiti was no wifely sidekick.

Indeed, as both scholars show, Nefertiti formed part of a divine trinity with the sun god Aten and the Pharaoh Akhenaten, while the disgruntled Atum and his outraged priests were packed off to the wilderness. Central to the new religion was an ecstatically immediate response to nature. In his brand-new palace, the young Pharaoh surrounded himself with elaborate gardens and the most thrillingly vibrant frescoes of nature. He also created a new style of roofless temple, opening up previously dark and shadowy complexes to direct sunlight—the emanation of his beloved Aten.

Sun worship was hardly original to Akhenaten, but the heretic king made it his own by jettisoning the cumbersome paraphernalia of mythic references that had previously burdened Egyptian litanies. In Akhenaten's hymns, Aten's light creates cattle, rivers, cities, and people, and suffuses them with cosmic vitality. But Aten himself is unknowable and imperceptible: the true ancestor of the Mosaic God. Akhenaten's "Great Hymn to the Aten," which has been compared both to Psalm 104 and to Saint Francis's "Canticle of the Sun," proclaims:

> You are distant, though your rays are on earth;
> you are in their face, though your course is inscrutable.

THE MOST INTRIGUING aspect of the Amarna court, however, is undoubtedly its art. Since Norman de Garis Davies published *Rock Tombs of El Amarna* in 1903, this flamboyantly exaggerated and convention-breaking style has mystified and sometimes appalled its admirers. Heinrich Schäfer described it as "expressionistic" in 1926. Amarna and modern art, in other words, mirrored each other uncannily. "An ecstasy of speed," writes Hornung, "pervades the chariot scenes," as if the latter were futurist images. At the center of this stylistic upheaval lie the enigmatic, almost hermaphroditic portraits of Akhenaten himself, especially the early ones executed by the sculptor Bak, who was later replaced by the more traditional Thuthmosis.

Hornung gives an amusing catalog of stunned reactions on the part of European scholars and writers. Adolf Erman in 1905 commented on the "strangely sick appearance of the king," which somehow proved he was "an enlightened despot." Mann famously wrote that Akhenaten reminded him of "an aristocratic young Englishman of somewhat decadent stock... pretty and well-favored not at all, but of a disturbing attractiveness." Joachim Spiegel (1950) noted the "pathological grotesqueness of his physical form." Eberhard Otto (1953) lamented both an "ugly and sickly" Akhenaten and the "tasteless and aberrant" scenes of intimate family life that characterize certain Amarna art. For some reason, this led Otto to conjecture, wildly, that Akhenaten was "unpolitical and egocentric."

Indeed, Hornung shows how psychological and medical interpretations of Akhenaten's portraits based on a literal reading of their anatomy-bending style have often fed dubious moral presumptions. Weigall's contemporary Gaston Maspero, for example, thought that the king was a eunuch, while Weigall himself claimed that he was an epileptic. Elliot Smith believed that he was hydrocephalic. Some works suggested he had suffered from Fröhlich's syndrome, a deformative disease. One of these, a 1968 biography by Cyril Aldred, created what Hornung calls "a totally absurd picture" of a psychologically and physically unsound monarch disposed to crazy and untenable religious ideas. "Ugly" and "sick," Hornung tells us, were the most common epithets applied to Amarna art by scholars at the turn of the century.

AKHENATEN, NEFERTITI, AND CHILDREN

During their brief reign, Akhenaten and Nefertiti were the John and Jackie Kennedy of the ancient world.

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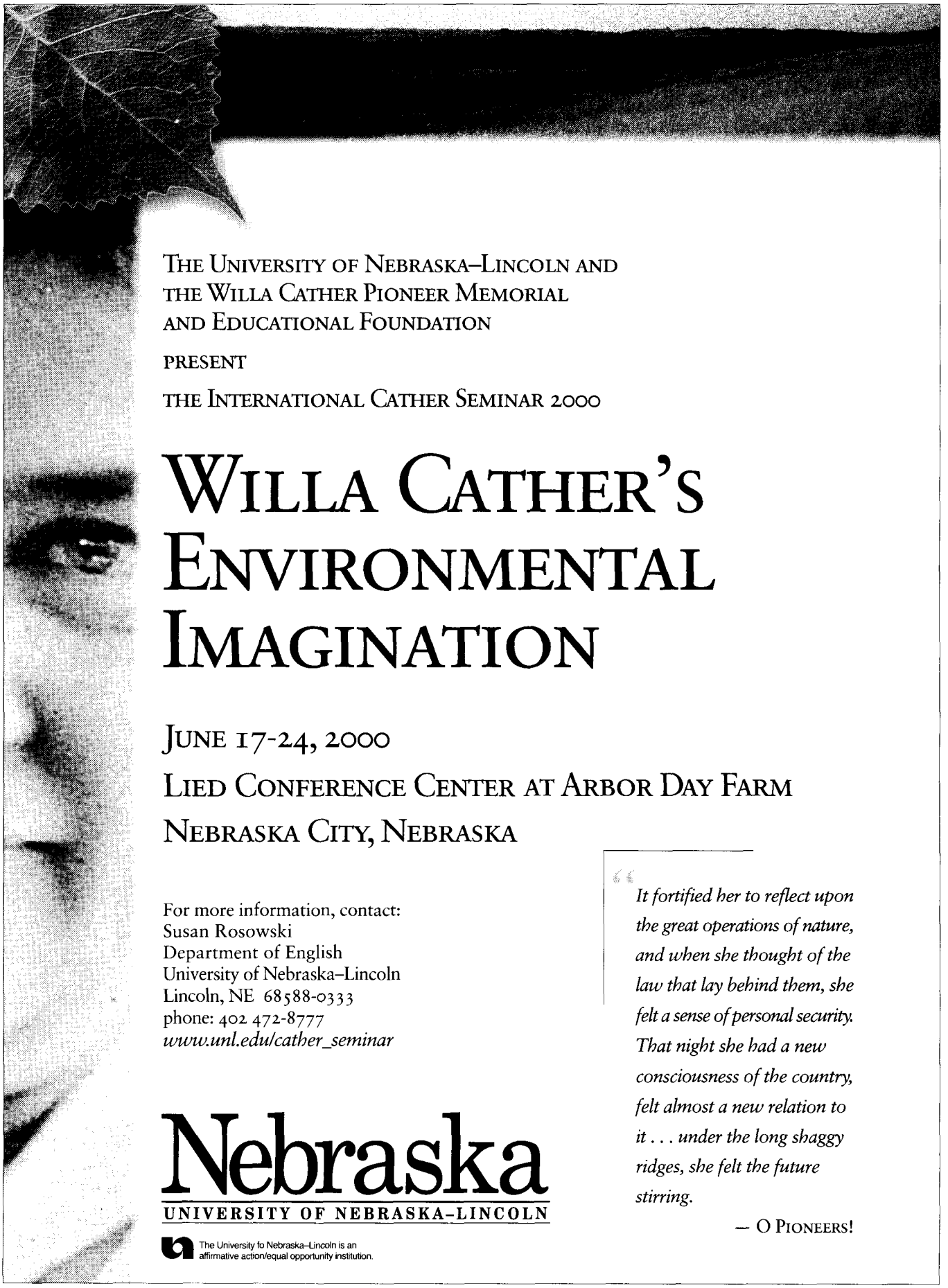

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> "*It fortified her to reflect upon the great operations of nature, and when she thought of the law that lay behind them, she felt a sense of personal security. That night she had a new consciousness of the country, felt almost a new relation to it . . . under the long shaggy ridges, she felt the future stirring.*
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Of course, Akhenaten has also had his admirers. Among them was the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted, who saw the Pharoah as a philosopher-pacifist *avant la lettre,* a kind of Bronze Age Bertrand Russell. Reality, Hornung seems to be saying, probably lay elsewhere, though he himself seems prone to much the same admiring impulse. "The sixteen years of his reign," Hornung writes enthusiastically, "demonstrate impressively how the tempo of historical development more than three thousand years ago could approximate that of modern times."

If Hornung is mostly concerned to show us how moderns have willfully overinterpreted Akhenaten, Tyldesley does a fine job of painting in the context of the Amarna court. Amarna art shows us the daily life of the royal family in unprecedented detail. We see Nefertiti dangling on Akhenaten's lap with their six daughters, just as we see the couple relaxing together, plainly enjoying each other's affections. At the same time, there is a dire lack of specific information about Nefertiti, and no mummy for either regent has ever been found. Akhenaten's successor, Tutankhamen, his son or son-in-law (the relation is not clear), left the most resplendent mummy of them all; but Akhenaten and Nefertiti simply disappeared into thin air. This leaves the field wide open for much speculation, which Tyldesley accordingly provides.

Did Nefertiti simply grow old and lose her prestige to her daughter Meritaten, who later symbolically married her own father? This is nowhere proved, but according to Tyldesley it is a distinct possibility given the prevalence of Egyptian royal incest. Then again, perhaps Nefertiti died of the same plague that carried off most of her children. Then there is the question of Nefertiti's shadowy rival, Kiya, Akhenaten's alternative favorite for a while. Finally, there is the queen's apparent lack of close relatives in the historical record—if we except her formidable sister Mutnodjmet, who later became the wife of the Pharaoh Horemheb.

Here Nefertiti's story closes in an ironic circle, for the stolid, traditional Horemheb is credited by most scholars with closing Akhenaten's Aten temples at Karnak. He is often accused of eradicating the memory of Egypt's most startling royal couple out of personal spite. What remains of Nefertiti, then, is an accident: that spare, exquisite bust that Thuthmosis casually left on a shelf after hurriedly moving his studio to Luxor. The left eye is missing, as if the studio assistants hadn't yet gotten around to it, though modern reproductions carefully avoid this sinister-looking lacuna. The severe regularity of the face has made it unnervingly timeless.

"Few of us are blessed with absolutely symmetrical features," Tyldesley concludes, "but Nefertiti, in the form of her bust, has been, and this contributes to her perfect but remote and faintly inhuman appearance." Tyldesley closes with Paglia: "The proper response to the Nefertiti bust is fear."

Lawrence Osborne is a frequent contributor to *LF*. He is the author of *The Poisoned Embrace: A Brief History of Sexual Pessimism* (Pantheon).

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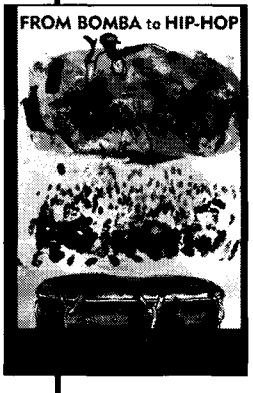

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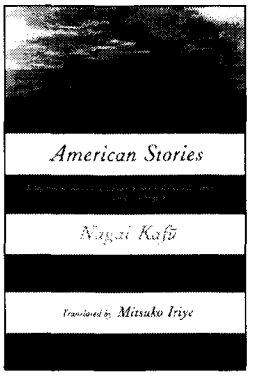

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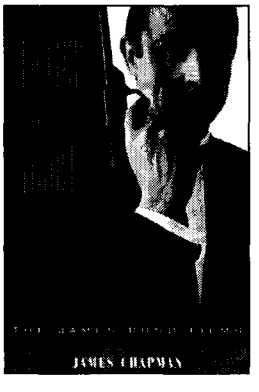

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Of Maggots and Men

BY DAVID RAKOFF

The Cockroach Papers: A Compendium of History and Lore
By Richard Schweid
Four Walls Eight Windows
193 pp • $16.00

A Fly for the Prosecution: How Insect Evidence Helps Solve Crimes
By M. Lee Goff
Harvard University Press
216 pp • $22.95

IN THE 1961 DOCUMENTARY film *Mondo Cane,* that glib art-house tour of the depths of human arcana, a brief sequence features shiny black beetles, their carapaces encrusted with jewels, tethered by small gold chains to pins. They crawl in slow circles over the dark worsteds and nubby tweeds of ladies' apparel. The folks who thought this up probably envisioned a nocturnal New York of women trailing clouds of Shalimar, crowding into smoky jazz clubs or elegant little boîtes, their breasts adorned with these dazzling curiosities. The fad never really caught on, alas, but one has to admire the optimism behind its if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em strategy. It is vanquishment dressed up as victory. Because, in truth, we can't beat 'em. We are merely guests on this planet, living out our briefest of historical intervals at the indulgence of the maggots, flies, beetles, and cockroaches who will outlive us all. Susceptible as we are to comparatively low levels of radiation, infection, and military aggression, the way of all human flesh is, literally, through the maxillae and mandibles of these tiny, crawling fauna.

It's a grim scenario, to be sure. Failing to inherit the earth ourselves, we humans would much rather the planet continue to spin under the stewardship of something with liquescent eyes, four limbs, some fur might be nice—something, in other words, cute. Quaint and wishful thinking. In his essay "Wordsworth in the Tropics," Aldous Huxley condemned any such cozy revisionism as the "Anglicanization" of nature. "It is fear of the labyrinthine flux and complexity of phenomena," Huxley wrote, "fear of the complex reality driving [us] to invent a simpler, more manageable, and, therefore, consoling fiction." Though the cold reality flies (ahem) in the face of our comforting self-delusions, nature is alien and inhospitable. The insectopia is inevitable.

With happy sternness, we men and women of the twenty-first century cast a jaundiced eye on romantic Wordsworthian fictions. We understand nature's random, anarchic, and

> Our world, a banquet for the six-legged.

lethal power. And as proof of our new appetite for taking nature straight, there are two new books, Richard Schweid's *The Cockroach Papers: A Compendium of History and Lore* and M. Lee Goff's *A Fly for the Prosecution*, that offer an unblinking look at our world as it is: a vast banquet for the six-legged.

Schweid's book—in addition to being an object of beauty, boasting French flaps and a flip book of cockroaches mating—is great fun, elegiac, and deeply informative. Page 2 kicks things off to a rollicking start with a reminiscence of a bohemian New York summer:

> There was a particular July morning when I left my dreams behind and woke up, and my first thought, even before opening my eyes was, What a strange feeling: the lightest of ticklings all over my body.... Lazily, I opened my eyes.... exterminators had come by and fumigated the building. My supine body was a charnel house, a killing field of dead and dying roaches that had come out from...all their sanctuaries.... The roaches covered the floor, thousands of them, and they were dying all over me. I leapt up screaming, my shout open throated and horrified.

With its protean meandering—from a discussion of the economics of *maquiladoras* to roach references sampled widely from world literature—and its abundance of elegantly simplified science, including a clarification of just what that yellowish ooze that bursts forth from the body of a cockroach crushed underfoot is (it's fat), Schweid's book is, and I mean this in the most respectful and complimentary way, not unlike a cockroach itself: at times disgusting, occasionally maddening, and reeking with a dark intelligence that it would be woefully misguided to underestimate.

As for Goff's *A Fly for the Prosecution,* it's hard not to start out loving a book that uses an image of two intertwined maggots as a design element. Ah, if only maggots were enough. Goff is a forensic entomologist in Hawaii. For the nonscientist, the subtitle alone, "How Insect Evidence Helps Solve Crimes," conjures up a fascinating, nineteenth-century Poe scenario: a nameless metaphysical haruspication performed upon the tiny bodies of arthropods, per-

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haps with their multifaceted eyes preserving a final image of the killer, or their wings dusted with gunpowder residue, or maybe swarms of bugs flying in some collective incriminating formation, revealing the perp's face ("I would have been free an' clear if it wasn't for those meddlesome fleas!").

Isn't it pretty to think so. Aside from a mention near the end of the book of drug traces extracted from the digestive tracts of maggots, it seems that insect evidence is good for one thing only: It helps in defining the postmortem interval—how long since death. As it happens, the human corpse left exposed to the elements is like a buffet table at a bar mitzvah, feasted upon and picked down to its bones, with insects playing the role of my ravening Jewish relatives. Each insect has a preferred diet, which determines when it lands and feeds.

As Goff explains, when a corpse is just ten minutes old, flies lay their eggs in its warm, wet orifices, whether naturally occurring or trauma-induced. They are followed by those species of insect whose adult forms feed on wet tissue. In cases where the corpse rests on soil, the meal then moves to microbes who burrow through the seepage-rich dirt, percolated with cadaverous goodness; next, to those insects who feed on other insects; thence to beetles who prefer to consume dried and desiccated flesh; and so on and so on, unto dust. The kind of insect retrieved indicates quite accurately (Goff has plotted out by species the mean times of infestation, thanks to a set of closely watched dead pigs) just how long the party has been going on.

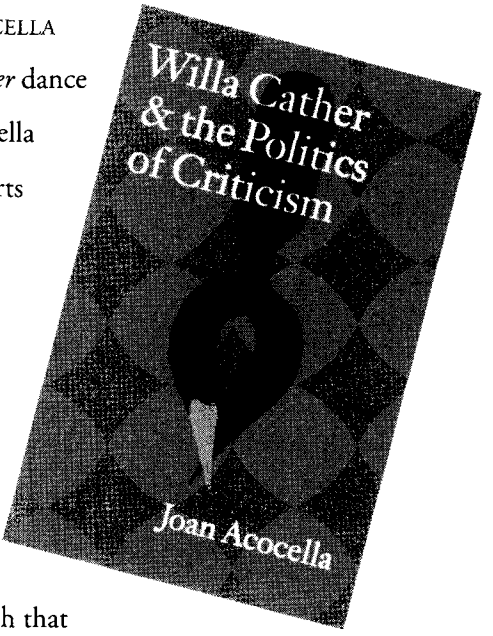
Goff explains the science of all this at great length. Perhaps too great for the nonentomologist. I, who am not a horror-movie watcher by any stretch of the imagination, found myself yearning for the next fleeting reference to a blackened corpse head or suppurating fissure teeming with hot, writhing maggots. To his credit, Goff makes no grandiose claims about insect evidence. But after slogging through a positively epic discussion of the perplexing slowness with which flies devoured a particular carcass, I wanted more of a payoff than to hear that the murderer came clean more or less of his own accord: "When the killer...was arrested," writes Goff, "his version of events confirmed my timetable."

Still, I'm intensely grateful to Goff that I now know the stages of decomposition (Fresh, Bloated, Decay, Post-Decay, and Skeletal), and both books clearly answer a cultural need at present. While engrossed in *The Cockroach Papers*, I sat across from a man on the subway—by the looks of him, respectable, normative, uncrazy, nonacademic—who was reading, with evident pleasure, a book titled *Spineless Wonders: Strange Tales From the Invertebrate World*. I looked it up on-line and found that its Amazon.com ranking was 74,386 (by comparison, the hardcover edition of Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth* had a ranking of 62,519 that day). How appropriate it seemed, the two of us reading our slithering, creepy books as we hurtled through dark tunnels, while on the streets above people moved in daylight, unaware of our presence underfoot.

David Rakoff is a writer living in New York. His book, *Fraud*, will be published by Doubleday in spring 2001.

Willa Cather and the Politics of Criticism

JOAN ACOCELLA



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TIRZAH MILLER

ONEIDA COMMUNITY MANSION HOUSE (1901)

All in the Family

BY BARBARA PACKER

Desire and Duty at Oneida: Tirzah Miller's Intimate Memoir
Edited by Robert S. Fogarty
Indiana University Press
198 pp • $27.95

THE LANDSCAPE OF America is littered with the bones of failed utopian communities. In the nineteenth century, reformers believed that the new republic was just the place to build perfect societies, where labor and the fruits of labor would be shared equally among the inhabitants, and poverty and strife would be unknown. The young Transcendentalists who joined Brook Farm in 1841 looked forward to a future in which the countryside would be dotted with Brook Farms and they would be revered as founders of the First Association.

It didn't work out that way. Poor choice of location, bad soil, inefficient farming or manufacturing practices, lack of capital, poor management, and internal strife broke up most communities within a few years of their founding. Brook Farm, which lasted from 1841 to 1847, was one of the longer experiments. Fruitlands, Bronson Alcott's vegan utopia, went under in six months, though not before bringing its inhabitants to the brink of starvation. Of the twenty-six miniature "phalanxes," or model societies, established by American followers of the French utopian theorist Charles Fourier during the 1840s, only two survived beyond 1850—and they were gone by 1855.

In the midst of such general failure, one community stands out for its long life and prosperity: The Oneida Community, led by John Humphrey Noyes, endured from 1848 to 1880. It had its own schools and farms, its own orchestra and newspaper. It ran a highly profitable factory, which turned out steel traps. Thousands of

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ONEIDA COMMUNITY C.1860

visitors came to see it every year, and at one point applications to join the community were coming in at fifty a month. Prosperity, however, was not the Oneida Community's only attraction. The Oneidan system of "complex marriage" seemed to promise sexual freedoms unmatched in any other society on earth.

Doctrines of sexual freedom were hardly what one would have expected from a religiously orthodox Vermont native like John Humphrey Noyes. Born in 1811, he graduated from Dartmouth and studied divinity at Yale. But at Yale, Noyes came under the influence of perfectionism—the belief that the human race is divided into the elect and the damned, and that the elect can achieve sinless perfection here on earth. A particularly radical group of Yale perfectionists argued that the Second Coming, long awaited by ordinary Christians, had in fact already taken place toward the end of the first century. Noyes, who became convinced of his own sinless perfection, argued that new epochs demand new dispensations. If heaven was a place where one neither married nor was given in marriage, then redeemed communities on earth should banish marriage, too. If Christians were supposed to share their possessions, why not their bodies?

All of this proved too radical for Yale, which expelled Noyes in 1834. But he continued to preach his gospel—friendly to communism, hostile to marriage—and by 1841, he had gathered around him a small community of followers in the village of Putney, Vermont. Believers practiced Bible communism, and complex marriage replaced monogamy. Complex marriage was not quite the same as free love, for there were rules governing the interchange of partners that were intended to make sex a central part of individual regeneration. But this distinction was lost on the authorities in Putney, who in 1847 charged Noyes with lewd and lascivious conduct and forced him to flee the state.

He took up residence with a disciple who had a farm in central New York. His Vermont followers joined him there in 1848, and the Oneida Community formally began. Its sixteen governing principles required Oneidans to pledge themselves, among other things, to "abandonment of the entire fashion of the world especially about marriage" and to "encouragement of love and limitation of propagation." The sexes slept apart, meeting instead for brief "love interviews" in which conversation was to be kept to a minimum and conception prevented by the practice of "male continence"—intercourse without ejaculation. Oneidans were encouraged to improve themselves by mating with their spiritual superiors in "ascending fellowship," but "mating horizontally" was also allowed. "The marriage supper of the Lamb," Noyes once wrote, "is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest."

In 1868 Noyes became fascinated by Darwin's theory of evolution and Francis Galton's

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writings about eugenics. They suggested to him the idea of controlled breeding. Couples who wished to have a child would apply to Noyes for approval. Noyes also suggested matches directly, a responsibility he later shared with a committee. Noyes was after more than strength or beauty in Oneidan offspring. He came to believe that in order to create a perfect race it would be necessary to breed sibling with sibling, uncle with niece, father with daughter. As Noyes's younger brother, George Washington Noyes, explained to their sister, love between siblings "approaches nearest to the fashion of God himself whose life ever turns in upon himself." Prohibitions against incest were the last snares of the devil. The quasi-horticultural term Noyes invented for this godlike experiment was "consanguineous stirpiculture" (from Latin *stirps,* "stem"). In the years between 1868 and 1879, stirpiculture produced fifty-eight offspring at the Oneida Community. The babies were a source of communal pride, brought out for public weighings. As each baby was placed in the scales, Oneida musicians offered a fanfare.

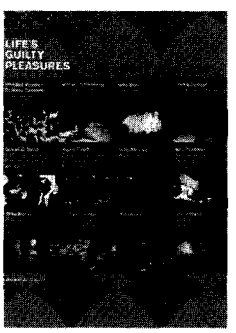
> Some women were "tenpenny whistles" in bed, but Tirzah was a "grand piano."

Noyes himself took an active role in the stirpiculture experiment, sometimes "initiating" female Oneidans as young as twelve. One of his favorite sexual partners was a woman named Tirzah Miller, the daughter of Noyes's sister Charlotte. Charlotte and her husband, John Miller, had been part of Noyes's original community in Vermont; they followed him to Oneida in 1848. When John Miller died suddenly in 1854, Noyes became Tirzah's surrogate father. As father and uncle, he evoked her unquestioning love and trust; as leader of the community, he commanded her obedience. He could order her to accept or abandon sexual partners. He could decide when she would have children and by whom. And when the children were born, he could tell her what to name them and when to wean them.

Tirzah, an articulate woman who was editor of the Oneida journal, *The Circular,* kept a written record of her experiences. Beginning in 1867, a few days before her twenty-fourth birthday, and continuing until 1880, just before the breakup of the Oneida Community, she wrote down at intervals what she thought and felt about her life, her lovers, her children, and the man who remained the god of her universe, John Humphrey Noyes. The memoir was later transcribed by her son, and a typewritten copy of it survived to become part of the Oneida Community Collection in the Arents Rare Book Room of Syracuse University. It has now been edited by Robert S. Fogarty, whose knowledge of American communal movements—and of the Oneida Community in particular—enables him to place Tirzah Miller's memoir in the larger context of American religious culture.

LET'S ENTERTAIN:

Life's Guilty Pleasures



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—Dennis Rodman

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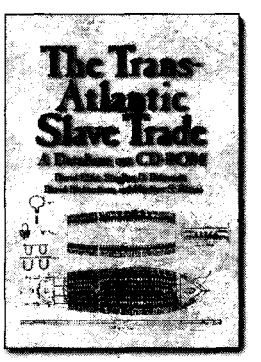

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THE MEMOIR, THOUGH fragmentary, is a fascinating document. Tirzah Miller was articulate, passionate, and analytic. The frankness with which sexuality was treated at Oneida means that her discussions of sex have a candor rare in nineteenth-century writing. "Talked with Ella in the evening," she notes, "and Mr. Noyes had me have an affair with G.K. and A.H.B." Much of her memoir recounts her struggles to submit herself to the will of Noyes, even when his orders cause her anguish. She bears three children to three different men, each of whom she falls in love with. Yet when Noyes requires it, she gives up her lovers and even agrees to stop seeing her second child, as if she were Chaucer's long-suffering Griselda.

Still, there is nothing meek about either Tirzah Miller's spirit or her prose. She is as open in recording her feelings of rebellion as she is scrupulous in recording the struggles with conscience that led her to submit to Noyes's will. The struggles became more painful as the years advanced. The aging Noyes was increasingly jealous of the younger lovers he matched to Tirzah. First, he broke off her affair with a man named Homer Barron and ordered her to try for a baby by one Edward Inslee, to whom she was not attracted. But when Tirzah became pregnant by Inslee and managed to fall in love with him after all, Noyes ordered their separation. Tirzah, six months pregnant, was then told to have sex with her mother's longtime companion, James Herrick. The jilted Homer and Edward were left to their own devices.

If the Oneida experience proves anything, it is that increasing the sexual availability of women does not necessarily increase the felicity of men; Tirzah broke the hearts of a string of disconsolate lovers. After one lovemaking session, Noyes told her that some women were "tenpenny whistles" in bed, but that she was a "grand piano," a sentiment echoed by several of her partners. No wonder they continued to pursue her; no wonder Noyes jealously tried to break up every deep love relationship she formed.

JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES

Noyes's reasoning was simple: If Christians were supposed to share their possessions, why not their bodies?

Although she longed for the departed Edward Inslee, Tirzah enjoyed the sexual encounters that were part of life at Oneida. At age thirty-three, she made love to a man fifteen years her junior. She noted: "We had a delightful time. I have not felt so much affected by any one since Edward left." In 1879, when Noyes fled to Canada because he feared the New York authorities were about to prosecute him, he sent one final directive back to Oneida: His followers were now free to marry if they wished. In any case, complex marriage must come to an end in two days. What Fogarty calls "frenzied sexual activity" followed this proclamation. Tirzah Miller joined as eagerly as anyone in this last-minute bacchanal. At one point, she passed the door of the bathhouse where her old lover Homer Barron was getting dressed. "I can hardly tell how it happened, but there seemed to be a subtle fire between us, and before we barely knew it he hurried me into the inside bathroom, where we—" That comic aposiopesis suggests why it is impossible to regard Tirzah Miller as anyone's victim; her sense of humor, like her sense of self, was far too strong.

In 1879 Tirzah Miller married James Herrick, the father of her third child. They remained faithful followers of Noyes, joining him on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, where he ordered them not to live together. Herrick suffered a nervous breakdown in 1880, but husband and wife were at Noyes's bedside when he died in 1886. Back in the United States, the Oneida Community dissolved, to be reorganized as a corporation, its metalworking equipment retooled to make the flatware for which it is still famous. Poor Edward Inslee, who had once played his "beautiful cornet" in the Oneida orchestra, drifted to Southern California, where he ended his days as a resident of a different Eden, playing in the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Upon her death in 1902, Tirzah Miller Herrick was buried beside Noyes. Fogarty deserves thanks for making Tirzah's absorbing story available to readers everywhere. It's a celebrity she would have enjoyed.

Barbara Packer is professor of English at the University of California at Los Angeles. She is the author of "The Transcendentalists," which appears in volume 2 of *The Cambridge History of American Literature*.

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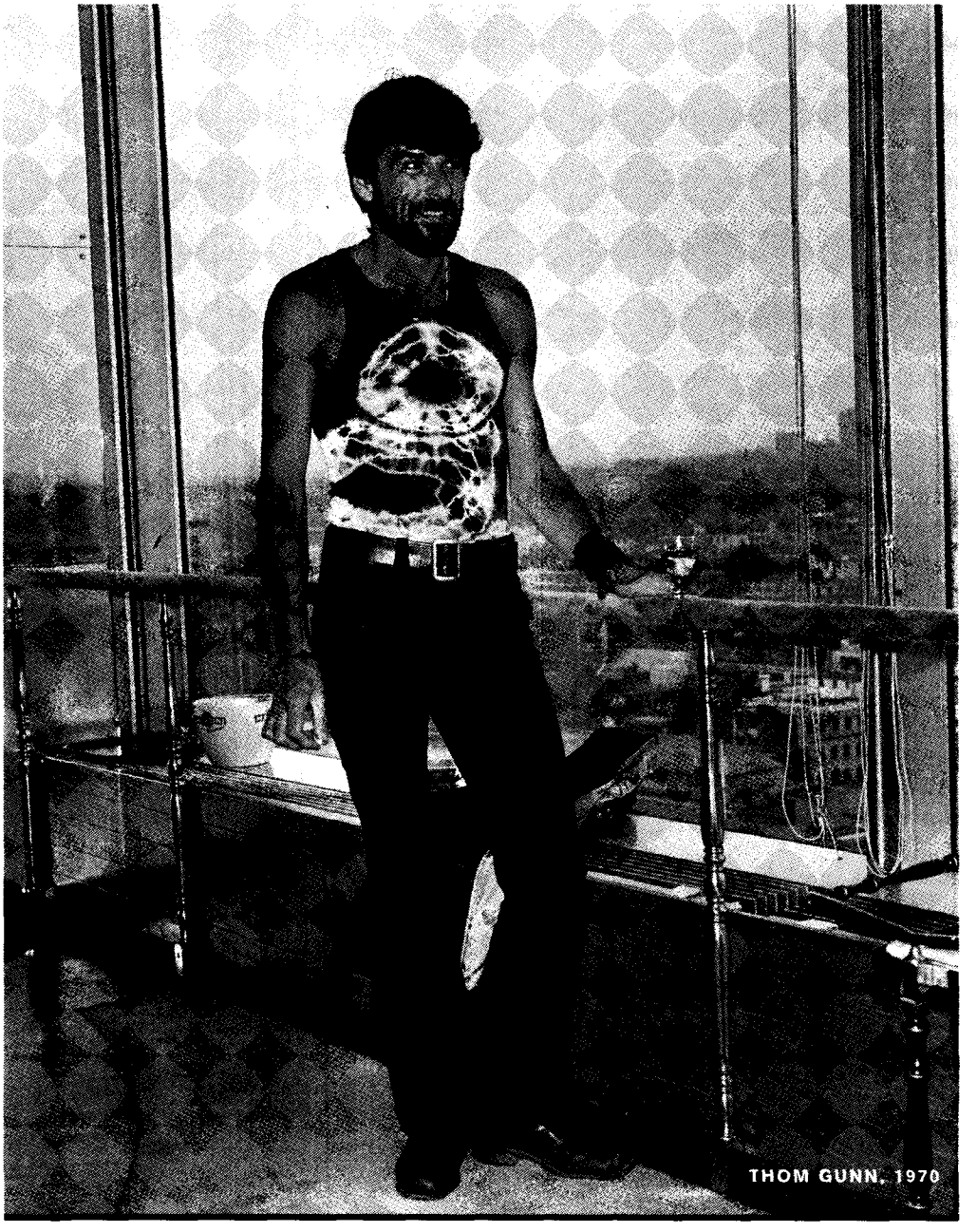
Tough Love

BY DAVID BERGMAN

ONE OF OUR FINEST living poets, Thom Gunn has not evoked the critical gush that some of his contemporaries have excited. Not that Gunn has been ignored. Since 1954, when he left Cambridge to study with Yvor Winters at Stanford, he has received his share of prizes, grants, and recognition. But he's never attracted the critical attention given to John Ashbery, James Merrill, or Seamus Heaney, or the devotees won by Charles Bukowski or Sharon Olds. The neoformalists, who might be expected to champion him, have preferred milder, less demanding poets, such as Donald Justice.

Perhaps it's his own fault. Gunn's poems, it sometimes seems, actively discourage admirers. They are rough, leathery, well-worn. Like men

Boss Cupid
By Thom Gunn
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
115 pp • $22.00



THOM GUNN, 1970

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at the gay bars he has so often described, they pose rather defiantly, showing off their wares but daring the reader to make the first move. These are not poems meant to win readers over with geniality and conviviality. They refuse to pretend to any immediate, but specious, familiarity.

The very manner of the poems is meant neither to dazzle nor to endear. Like the other members of the Movement, the literary group that included Donald Davie and Philip Larkin, Gunn has taken Thomas Hardy as his guide. Like Hardy, he employs traditional forms and meter, prefers straightforward if somewhat abstract language, and projects a flinty disdain for comforting illusions. The Movement rejected Dylan Thomas's neo-Romantic flights of fancy. To be sure, Gunn occasionally uses syllabics, free verse, and psychedelic drugs, but he's never used them in a particularly daring way. What he says of Hardy may be equally applied to himself: His aim is "clarity and modesty," and his stylistic hallmark is a "brilliant impetuous clumsiness."

Take, for example, the concluding lines to the title poem of his last collection, *The Man With Night Sweats* (1992). The speaker hugs his body,

> As if to shield it from
> The pains that will go
> through me,
>
> As if hands were enough
> To hold an avalanche off.

Gunn loves to end lines—and here a poem—with prepositions, the least stable syntactic conclusion. In this case, the ending is made all the more unstable because it is impossible to decide whether "off" is supposed to be a stressed or an unstressed syllable or how closely it should rhyme with "enough." Is "avalanche" supposed to be pronounced as three syllables or elided into two? The uncertain thud at the end of the poem is not a failure of execution but a powerful way to show the collapse of the safeguards we have constructed. Such effects are not designed to bring down the house or send a reader swooning with delight. Instead, they chill with their unsettling appropriateness.

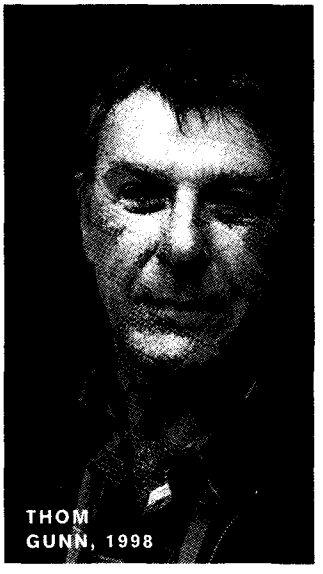
Boss Cupid is filled with these seeming failures. In "A Home," Gunn writes about a young man brought up in shelters. Most of the poem proceeds in steady iambic pentameter. But when Gunn imagines how the boy's mind would experience a real home, he writes, "And it delights in the cool new-found ease / With which it slips the habitual weary tautness." The poem builds up to an almost spondaic stress in the phrase "cool new-found ease" and is then released in the looser, more trisyllabic feet of "the habitual weary tautness." The falling rhythm tells us all we need to know about what it feels like when that "habitual weary tautness" gives out like an old elastic band. The abstractness of the language may put us off until we recognize the concreteness of the rhythms.

A final example of Gunn's "brilliant impetuous clumsiness" may indicate his range. "In the Post Office" presents Gunn following a young bicyclist after he has mailed a package:

> ...I watched him ride
> Down 18th Street, rising
> above the saddle
> For the long plunge he
> made with every pedal,
> Expending far more
> energy than needed.
> If only I could do whatever
> he did...

In the phrase "the long plunge," each successive syllable gets a bit more stress, but the gravity of the effect is undermined by the comic mosaic rhyme of "needed" with "he did." The clumsy rhyme stumbles after the graceful boy, in a gentle mockery of the seventy-year-old Gunn, who may no longer have the energy for ostentatiously long plunges but would still like to follow.

Gunn has always eschewed an easy intimacy. In his first volume, *Fighting Terms* (1954),



THOM GUNN, 1998

Like the men at the gay bars he has so often described, Gunn's poems dare the reader to make the first move.

his reticence was caused by his need to hide his homosexuality. As he told an ambiguous "you": "I am not what I seem, believe me, so / For the magnanimous pagan I pretend / Substitute a forked creature as your friend." But even when he came out in his 1961 collection, *My Sad Captains*, he kept his distance: "Why pretend / Love must accompany erection? / This is a momentary affection, / A curiosity bound to end." In "Cat Island" from *Boss Cupid*, he praises cats for not pretending "to be other than whores":

> they give you not
> the semblance of love
> but simply
> a look at their beauty
> in return for food.

Beauty is present, and also nourishment, but Gunn is careful not to pretend there is more to the relationship. As he tells a young man in an untitled poem:

> Save the word
> empathy, sweetheart,
> for your freshman essays.
> . . . . . .
> Try 'sympathy.' With that
> your isolated self may
> split a cloak with the
> beggar...

When we think we can become one with another person, Gunn suggests, we delude ourselves.

Or worse. One of the more disturbing poems in *Boss Cupid* is "Troubadour," dedicated to Jeffrey Dahmer, the "serial murderer, cannibal, and necrophile." The sequence, written in Dahmer's voice, avoids easy moralizing. Gunn's point seems to be that Dahmer's insanity and criminality are exaggerations only in degree of the empathy and intimacy so much celebrated in contemporary culture. Dahmer's murders are an extension of his desire to be joined forever with his beloveds. Unable to accept their separateness, their autonomy, he must literally "taste [their] boyish glow." Dahmer is an uninspired version of Rimbaud, the subject of another of Gunn's poems, who "Ate all provincial France,

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the pasturing herd / And village-girls he once had thought to wive. / His shit was poetry: alchemy of the word."

For Gunn, distance is a necessary condition for sustaining love. In "Rapallo," one of the more remarkable poems of the collection, Gunn addresses his companion of more than forty years. It begins at evening. Gunn is twenty-three; his companion, twenty-one. They have spent "a spacious day" at the beach, but as Gunn washes out his bathing suit, he loses himself for a minute. The bottom of the sink has filled with sand, like the bottom of an hourglass, and no longer reflects his face. He enters a fugue state, in which his exhausted happiness (which is also his interrupted sense of an integrated self) searches for its original inspiration. "From habit," Gunn at last turns around to see his beloved dressing, and at that moment his sense of self returns: "without you as ground, / How could it stay intact?" The beloved is both the force that keeps Gunn grounded in happiness and the ground against which he needs to picture himself. Yet just as the poem seems to be tilting toward a platonic notion that love is "desire and pursuit of the whole," Gunn pulls back. The poem fast-forwards to the present:

> The cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer is an uninspired successor to the Rimbaud who "ate all provincial France."

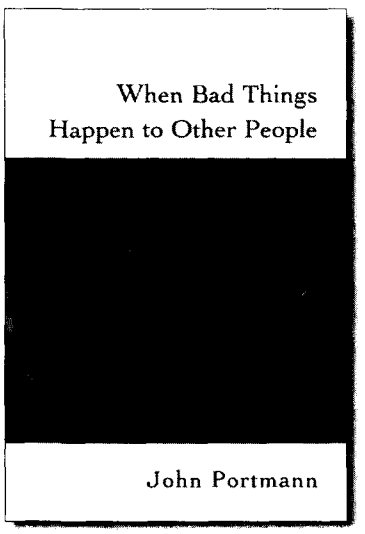
> If in four decades matter-of-factly
> Coming to be resigned
> To separate beds was not exactly
> What we then had in mind,
>
> Something of our first impetus,
> Something of what we planned
> Remains of what was given us
> On the Rapallo sand.

Love endures even as romance fades. Indeed, one has the sense that love endures because it has been subsumed into the matter-of-fact life that includes separate beds, which are not entirely removed from what was planned at the beginning. "Impetus," with its suggestion of physics, seems at first an odd choice of word, but it perfectly matches the passivity of the phrase "what was given us"—as if love, though an act of grace, had to accommodate itself to the laws of mechanics.

If we wonder why so few people gush over Thom Gunn, we may need to look no further than this antisentimental eroticism, his unwillingness, even in his love poems, to indulge the reader in the fantasies that are the currency of popular appeal. His stern insistence on his own integrity—poetic, emotional, and physical—wins only our reluctant assent. But that may be all he's after.

David Bergman is professor of English and director of the Cultural Studies Program at Towson University. His most recent book of poetry is *Heroic Measures* (Ohio State).

"Too bad you didn't get tenure..."



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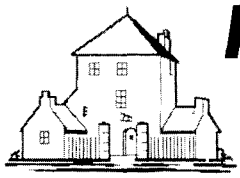

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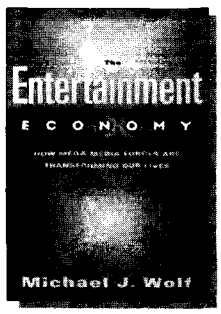

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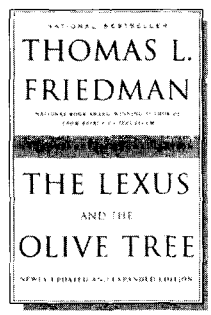

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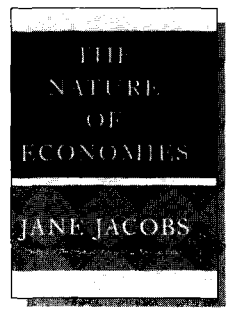

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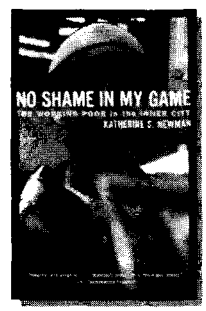

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The Garden of Sweden

BY ERIC ZENCEY

Linnaeus: Nature and Nation
By Lisbet Koerner
Harvard University Press
298 pp • $39.95

TAXONOMY IS PRACTICAL politics. Absent a narcissist's faith in your own opinion or a very un-postmodern belief in the objectivity of classification, you face a classic political problem whenever you put things in groups: Whose vision of groupness should prevail? No surprise, then, that the work of Carl Linnaeus, the eighteenth-century taxonomist, offers grounds for partisan wrangling.

In *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation,* Lisbet Koerner presents the Swedish botanist's life and work as "a case study of the relation between natural knowledge and political economy in the early Enlightenment." Born in 1707, Linnaeus is best known for his sex-based system of plant classification and for the Latin binomials still used to name species today. Both brought order to botanical chaos, allowing scientists from different regions and cultures to be more certain whereof they spoke. By naming plants according to their classification, and by classifying them according to the structural characteristics of their reproductive systems (easily observed and relatively unchanging over the life of the plant), Linnaeus aimed to create a universal system that could be understood, used, even extended by almost anyone.

If your knowledge of Linnaeus ends here, the fuller picture his biography provides is surprising. Love of country, and a deep empathy for its starving peasants, forged his life's purpose. His goal was to feed Sweden's peasantry by creating the wealth of a sprawling empire within his Nordic homeland. To that end, he attempted to grow bananas, coffee, and other tropical imports in the frigid environs of Uppsala, where he lived and taught. Koerner shows the relationship between Linnaeus's political beliefs and his botanizing, between his concepts of nation and nature, and the story she tells is compelling.

CARL LINNAEUS

Animated by nationalist sentiment, Linnaeus was also a cameralist—a follower of an economic school that originated in seventeenth-century Germany among princely treasurers, men trusted alone with bullion in camera. Like mercantilists, cameralists taught that a country's reserves of hard specie were a measure of its economic health. Unlike mercantilists, they held that trade was always and everywhere an invitation to decline. With economic growth not the blatant fact it is today, gross world product seemed to them fixed. Innocent of marginal utility analysis, they saw all movement of goods across national borders as zero-sum. From this it followed that the rationally governed, self-sufficient nation was best.

Problem: Such autarkies are not created equal. Without trade, life is commodious only for subjects of those nations that already contain resources for diverse and prolific production within their borders. Of course, a country lacking in this regard might alter its fate through territorial expansion or the integration of colonies into the homeland. But if you're an eighteenth-century Swede and a realist, you know your country isn't about to conquer its neighbors or establish an empire. What to do?

Although Linnaeus saw clearly the grounds for comparative advantage—"Nature has arranged itself in such a way that each country produces something especially useful," he wrote in 1746—he couldn't see the mutual benefits of free trade. To him, the differences in endowment among nations were evidence of a providential plan. It was, however, a plan that included a significant role for humans: "The task of economics," that passage continues, "is to collect from other places and cultivate [at home] such things that don't want to grow [here]."

And so Linnaeus undertook his quixotic program of import

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replacement through "acclimatization": the adaptation of exotic plants to Sweden's difficult climate. He begged seeds and samples from students he sent to botanize abroad: tea from China, bananas and coffee from Central America, mulberries to encourage a domestic silk industry. "Should Coconuts chance to come into my hands," he wrote to one correspondent, "it would be as if fried Birds of Paradise flew into my throat when I opened my mouth." His demonstration plot at Uppsala held cacao, rice, sugarcane, ginger, olive trees, and sago palms. Thanks to continual replanting, the garden itself appeared to thrive even as individual specimens succumbed to the cold. Protecting his theory with ad hoc explanation, Linnaeus attributed failures to chance or to the weaknesses of individual plants.

If Linnaeus's project seems hopelessly deluded, it needs to be set against the knowledge available at the time. He generalized too ambitiously from successful transplants: Rhubarb, tobacco, red currants, larches, honeysuckle, the horse chestnut, the Swiss maple, and the cherry could be made to grow north of their native range, so why not mulberries, coffee, tea? In 1761 he admitted his failure to transplant coffee—"it is obvious that [coffee] can never successfully be planted and multiplied by us, since its homeland lies on the equator"—and went on to engage in demand-side management by denouncing the bean as a moral and medical hazard. In its place he recommended a decoction of burned "peas, beechnuts, almonds, beans, maize, wheat, or toasted bread." To his credit, Linnaeus recognized his mistakes and learned: Gradually he came to articulate something like the idea of ecosystems to explain his failures.

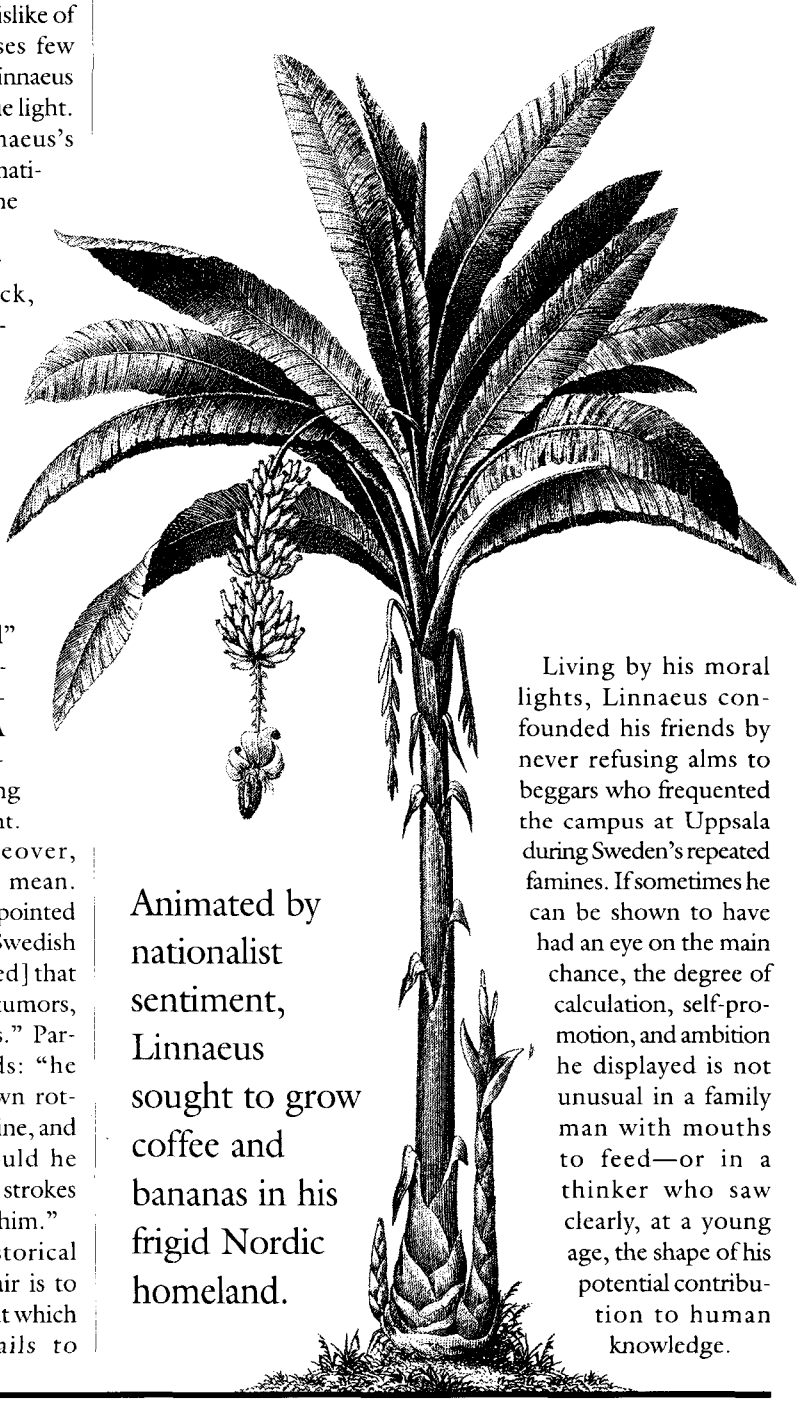
Thinkers who, like Linnaeus, flourished before current disciplinary lines were drawn present a special challenge to scholarly biography. Koerner is equal to the task, smoothly integrating historical material from biology, botany, anthropology, economics, theology, medicine, politics, and culture. The book is, however, marred by Koerner's evident dislike of her subject. She misses few occasions to interpret Linnaeus in the most uncharitable light.

In recounting Linnaeus's experiments with acclimatization, for instance, she doesn't mention his anticipation of that other taxonomist, Lamarck, whose theory of evolution by transmission of acquired characteristics wasn't conclusively rejected until the mid–nineteenth century. She tells with relish of Linnaeus having to recant his ambitious claim to a "natural" (nonarbitrary) taxonomy—but fails to mention how modern DNA analysis allows us to classify organisms according to their lines of descent.

Sometimes, moreover, Koerner is just plain mean. When Linnaeus was appointed chief physician to the Swedish navy, "his vitae boast[ed] that he could cure scurvy, tumors, smallpox, and syphilis." Parenthetically she adds: "he could not heal his own rotting teeth, gout, migraine, and melancholy. Nor could he reverse the many small strokes that eventually killed him."

Empathy is to historical understanding what air is to fire, an aliment without which it smolders and fails to enlighten. Koerner's animosity undercuts the readerly trust on which even the most thoroughly footnoted work of scholarship ultimately depends.

Why the dislike? A case could be made that Linnaeus's energetic carriage of biota across the seams of Pangaea makes him the patron devil of ecological invasion, a problem that ranks with loss of habitat as a major destroyer of natural diversity. But Koerner doesn't seem motivated by a love of nature. She disapproves of the Great Taxonomist, the man who tried to subsume all life into a nonarbitrary system of classification: Haven't too many people been pushed to the margins by culturally specific labels masquerading as objective truth? Then too, "Linnaeus never distinguished the moral from the natural," she objects.



Animated by nationalist sentiment, Linnaeus sought to grow coffee and bananas in his frigid Nordic homeland.

Living by his moral lights, Linnaeus confounded his friends by never refusing alms to beggars who frequented the campus at Uppsala during Sweden's repeated famines. If sometimes he can be shown to have had an eye on the main chance, the degree of calculation, self-promotion, and ambition he displayed is not unusual in a family man with mouths to feed—or in a thinker who saw clearly, at a young age, the shape of his potential contribution to human knowledge.

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Throughout his life, Linnaeus was pious but far from conventional: He taught his dog to leave church during sermons so that he could follow along in sham concern. His home was unusual by any measure. As Koerner writes:

> In Linnaeus's house parrots and monkeys played among stuffed animals, potted plants, insect specimens, mineral samples, scientific instruments, and herbaria sheets. The walls of his rooms disappeared behind tangled branches—some thirty species of songbirds nested in them. Using fish-glue, Linnaeus pasted botanic prints as wallpaper. He also hung on the walls framed portrait engravings of botanists, sheets of paper with handwritten botanic annotations, and pressed plants.

He covered the floors with old manuscript pages to catch droppings and believed that

Linnaeus taught his dog to leave church during sermons so that he could follow along in sham concern.

one female monkey, whom he called by name, could speak a few simple words. His relationship with her was the foundation of his belief that humans were properly classified as primates, perhaps even somehow co-related. Toward the end of his life, in fact, he suspected the mutability of species.

If this Linnaeus charms, it's all the more remarkable that this, too, is a Linnaeus Koerner shows us. Unfortunately, she can't forgive him for not being postmodern. Again and again we see her shake her head: The pious old taxonomist just didn't get it.

And yet Linnaeus remains a worthy ancestor whose ideas still illuminate the relationship between the world of nature and the world of profit and loss. "Nature's economy shall be the base for our own, for it is immutable, but ours is secondary," he declared in 1763. We've since learned (sometimes to our sorrow) that nature changes, but the rest of the idea is admirably cogent.

These days, economy too often trumps ecology, giving us species driven to extinction, ecosystems simplified to radical instability, and markets that can't include the bids of future humans (let alone the interests of nonhumans) when settling the fate of the planet. If we were to reverse the relation—subordinate economics to ecology—the supposedly "dismal" science might be forced to abandon its radically optimismic assumptions that no change is ever permanent and economic activity cannot have any effect on its milieu. Ending those particular denials seems a good idea if we're to constrain production within appropriate biological limits before all the rain forests are gone. "An economist without knowledge of nature," Linnaeus wrote, "is like a physicist without knowledge of mathematics." Would that this analogy were better credited today.

Eric Zencey is the author of the novel *Panama* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) and, most recently, *Virgin Forest: Meditations on History, Ecology, and Culture* (Georgia).

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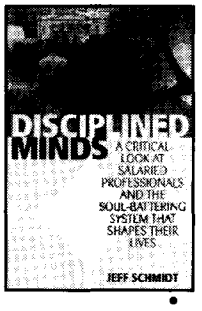
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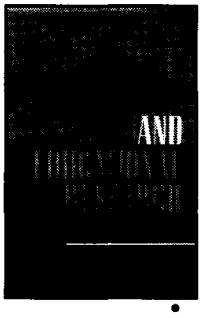

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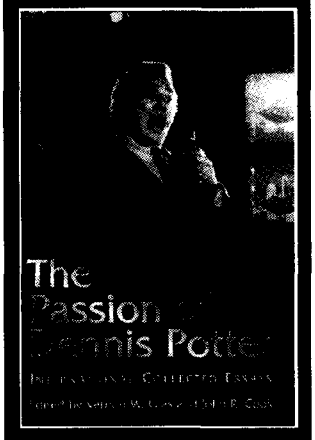

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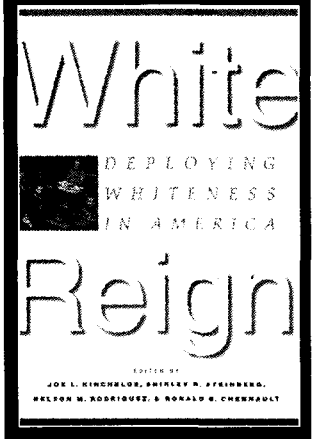

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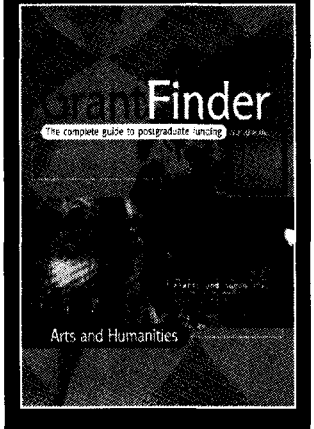

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American Without Tears

BY JOHN PALATTELLA

"Here, There, and Everywhere": The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture
Edited by Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May
University Press of New England
400 pp • $24.95

IN NOVEMBER 1991, THE German film director Wim Wenders warned the people of Berlin that "we are all still foreigners and are trying to settle an unfamiliar land called Germany." Oddly enough, he was referring not to the internal troubles of his newly reunified nation but to the menace of "American images that more and more exclusively nourish the imaginations of the peoples of this world." Two years later, a similar fear of American cultural imperialism inspired the efforts of French president Jacques Chirac to shelter his country's film industry from competition. "A society that abandons to others its means of representation," declared Chirac, "is an enslaved society."

It's undeniable that parts of Europe, if not the world, are saturated with American mass culture: If Michael Jackson isn't the most famous person in the world, Madonna probably is, and even the worst Hollywood sequels crowd the video shops of Peshawar. But that hardly means that the complaints of Wenders, Chirac, and countless European intellectuals are justified. Such laments tend to presume that America's cultural exports lead ineluctably to the colonization of foreign minds and, conversely, that the protection of markets by quotas, tariffs, and subsidies nurtures native talents. Challenging these assumptions is the aim of *"Here, There, and Everywhere": The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture,* a collection of essays edited by Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May.

"Who was in charge of all of this, anyway?" Wagnleitner and May ask, regarding American cultural exports, in their introduction. "Was it Wall Street, Madison Avenue, the Pentagon, the CIA, or Hollywood?... Or was it simply 'the people,' nationalities be damned?" Most of the twenty-one contributors to *"Here, There, and Everywhere"* maintain that American culture abroad neither ushers in a nightmare of alienation nor serves as the fifth column that various U.S. government agencies wanted to establish in Europe as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. The reason, Wagnleitner and May contend, is that American mass culture changes meaning when it crosses national borders. In the argot of cultural studies, it becomes an ingredient in a "cultural mélange created by *creolization* or hybridization." Woody Allen's Alvy Singer may be a whiny jerk in Manhattan, but he comes off as a veritable *philosophe* on the Champs-Elysées.

"Here, There, and Everywhere" is a fitting vehicle for the editors' efforts to put the very idea of Americanization to rest (even if the title is taken from the Beatles, courtesy of the UK). The volume began as a seminar held at the Schloss Leopoldskron, a castle perched on a mountain near Salzburg, Austria. Most Americans know the Schloss as the setting for the film version of *The Sound of Music.* But since 1947, the Schloss has also been the home of the Salzburg Seminar, founded by three Harvard students as a forum where European intellectuals could gather to discuss American culture. "From the very beginning, European students had invited their American colleagues to organize an exchange forum," Oliver Schmidt explains in his

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According to French president Jacques Chirac, "a society that abandons to others its means of representation is an enslaved society."

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essay on the Salzburg Seminar's early years. "Letters, applications, and evaluation reports indicate over and over young Europeans' dual interest in, and suspicion of, the emerging formula of the 'American way of life.'"

Much of *"Here, There, and Everywhere"* dwells on the vexed reactions to American culture during the Cold War era. Thomas Fuchs, for instance, argues that a profound hatred for American rock 'n' roll was perhaps the only thing that West German capitalists shared with East German communists. Elsewhere, American mass culture was embraced so fully that it was no longer treated as an import, let alone a threat. Michael May's profile of Oleg Lundstrem, an octogenarian Russian jazz musician, opens with Lundstrem scolding May for mischaracterizing his passion. "Jazz belongs to the whole world," Lundstrem insists. "You know—at one time the waltz was Viennese music, but now it is international. It is the same way with jazz. Once it is international—you can do nothing to stop it." Indeed, at the end of the piece, after hinting at the variety of bleats and blasts seeping out of basement bars in contemporary Moscow, the American leaves no doubt that Lundstrem has won him over. May confesses he is amazed that jazz, treated by Soviet-era Stalinists as the epitome of capitalist decadence, has become "an oasis of Russian virtues—intensity, dedication, and soul—in a country drowning in American commercialism."

May's piece is by far the collection's sunniest, but most of the contributors are comfortable with the idea that Europeans can admire American popular culture without necessarily absorbing America's dreaded free-market politics. Some essays, however, do raise difficult questions. Nosa Owens-Ibie's "Programmed for Domination" portrays the fierce economic and cultural pressure that American broadcasters have exerted on the Nigerian television industry. When the Nigerian government sought to launch a state-controlled public broadcasting system more than forty years ago, the country lacked both its own hardware and its own programming. Consequently it ended up securing them from NBC, but only after agreeing to allot nearly half of the government station's airtime to the American network.

The commercialization of Nigerian public broadcasting over the last decade has hardly stemmed the tide of imports; CNN and Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network have become standard programming fare, further consolidating the place of American television in Nigeria. One doesn't need to believe in the inviolability of traditional cultures to wonder if this is quite what the champions of hybridization have been hoping for.

John Palattella is associate editor of *University Business* and the editor of *LF*'s Breakthrough Books column.

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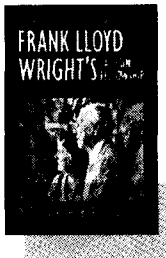

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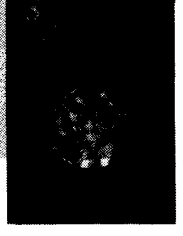

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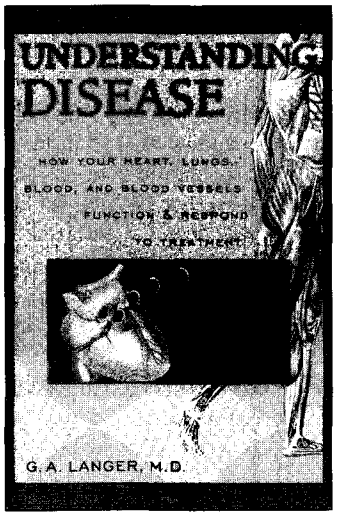

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Romance, She Wrote

BY JOHN SUTHERLAND

Idol of Suburbia: Marie Corelli and Late-Victorian Literary Culture
By Annette R. Federico
University Press of Virginia
203 pp • $30.00

THE CAREER OF THE Victorian novelist Marie Corelli was, to use the current English argot, gobsmacking. The author of such hot-blooded romances as *The Sorrows of Satan* (nowadays her best-known work) and *The Mighty Atom* (not, alas, the first fictional treatment of quantum mechanics, but a polemic against popular education) was, without doubt, the best best-seller writer of her century, in terms of both cash earned and copies sold. But she herself was always her finest work of fiction.

Corelli was born plain Minnie Mackay, the (probably) illegitimate daughter of a hack litterateur and his house servant. After a painfully deprived childhood, Miss Mackay metamorphosed into the chanteuse Rose Trevor (she had real musical gifts), and then into the full-blown literary butterfly Marie di Corelli (her literary gifts were more questionable). Her first novel was published when she was thirty-one—or seventeen by her own account. Corelli rode triumphantly on the new mass readership created by the 1870 universal education act. It helped that the three-volume "library" novel was replaced, in 1894, by the more affordable and portable six-shilling "single-decker." But Corelli was not merely the idol of suburbanites. Queen Victoria whiled away summers at Balmoral, and Gladstone the parliamentary recesses, reading Corelli's latest work. The Prince of Wales admired the little authoress, and she adored him, inserting His Royal Highness daringly into her romantic narratives.

With great shrewdness, the novelist manipulated her celebrity with "corrected" (that is, lavishly retouched) photographs, enshrining the ideal (or as she saw it, "true") mental image that the English public had of her. To be close to her soul mate Shakespeare, she took up residence in Stratford-upon-Avon, where on summer evenings, as Annette Federico records, she would glide down the river in a gondola, complete with an imported Venetian gondolier. On a raised platform in her house, Mason Croft (now the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute), she would perch—five feet nothing in her silk stockings—to receive visitors.

Although she did much good work on preserving Shakespearean monuments from Stratford's vandalizing town council, Corelli was not a loved neighbor. During World War I, her fellow citizens shopped her to the authorities on a trumped-up charge of food hoarding. Nor did the reviewers love her. Her fiction was invariably received with a chorus of male contempt. It may be that, like her novelist-heroine Mavis Clare in *The Sorrows of Satan*, Corelli trained her lapdogs to shred the papers that abused their mistress. It's an observable fact that she had a slip inserted into her later novels declaring that no review copies would be sent out. If the newspaper reptiles wanted her books, they could buy them like everyone else.

Corelli's personal life was, like her photographs, rigorously "correct." She cohabited (decently, all biographers agree) with a lifetime companion, Bertha Vyver. Late in life, she conceived a hopeless passion for the tenth-rate artist Arthur Severn, on which Federico has interesting new things to say. Corelli died in 1924, possibly from the effects of decades of overtight corseting.

Alas, bestsellerdom is the slipperiest of poles: At Corelli's earning peak, in the 1890s, publishers had lined up to offer five-figure advances, but seventeen years after her death her annual royalty checks amounted to a pitiful seventy-three pounds. Her surviving partner, Bertha, starved genteelly. Nowadays, Corelli is read only by those with a perverse taste for the absurd and by New Age nuts. Some twenty-seven of her works are currently available in the United States from Kessinger Books, a Montana-based firm that specializes in "Rare Esoterica and Masonic Reprints."

Corelli was not merely a romance novelist; her work veered sharply at times into the realm of the esoteric. Her first published novel, *A Romance of Two Worlds* (1886), proselytizes for the "Electric Creed" (don't ask) and features a magician (a "Great Electrician" in Corelli-speak) called Heliobas. It gets even more mystical. My favorite Corelli novel is *Barabbas: A Dream of the World's Tragedy* (1893). This melodrama centers on the Crucifixion and introduces a villainess named Judith Iscariot (sister of Judas). Corelli evidently thought that "Iscariot" was a surname, like

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Smith—or Mackay. Finally, her millenarian masterpiece, *The Master Christian* (1900), unashamedly directs a plea for peace to all the Christian churches of the world, "in the name of Christ," whose advocate the novelist took herself to be.

UNTIL RECENTLY, THE definitive work on Corelli was Brian Masters's *Now Barabbas Was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli* (1978). Masters dispensed with Corelli's absurdities in a bluff, commonsensical style. Recently, a number of feminist literary critics have set out to upend Masters's sometimes patronizing interpretations. Teresa Ransom's *The Mysterious Marie Corelli: Queen of Victorian Bestsellers* (Sutton, 1999) went so far as to present Corelli as a woman ahead of her time—a feminist *avant la lettre*. Commentators agreed that the feminist emphasis of the book was timely and that Corelli's bizarreries, as always, made merry reading. There was, however, one jarringly discordant review in the *Spectator*—from a furious Brian Masters. Masters's complaint was, bluntly, that Ransom had ripped him off. Although she does not mention him once in the text or index, Ransom appears to draw on Masters's (very impressive) discoveries and follow the trail he blazed through various libraries and private depositories. His anger at what appears a lamentable professional discourtesy is, in my view, justified.

Due to the peculiar rhythms of scholarly publishing, Annette Federico was unable to engage with Ransom's work—other than in a wistful footnote anticipating the future arrival of a book that, as it turns out, was published some months before her own. Masters will not, one feels, be inclined to rip into Federico as he did into Ransom: She scrupulously acknowledges that she draws heavily on his primary research. Indeed, her book is punctuated by the invocation of heavyweight authorities. Of her first chapter, "The Queen of Best-Sellers" (an unfortunate echo of Ransom's subtitle), Federico writes: "I use Roland Barthes's essay on the photographic image and the work of Marxist critics Guy Debord and Pierre Macherey to analyze Corelli's struggle to control her image at the moment of expanding consumerism, the development of mass media, and changing interpretations of the author."

Where Masters saw only "mirror, mirror on the wall" personal vanity, and Ransom inarticulate feminist aspiration, Federico demarcates a site for multiple high-critical genuflection. This binocularity—conjoining Corelli with a regiment of fashionable commentators from Nina Auerbach to Alex Zwerdling—creates an odd flavor. The fiction is, by common judgment, irredeemable bosh and tosh. Why dignify it with theory? One might as well take a scalpel to a jellyfish. Nonetheless, as a phenomenon—an event in the history of literary celebrity—Corelli is undeniably significant. And indeed Federico deals with the "Victorian phenomenon called Marie Corelli" illuminatingly. The mutations and manipulations of her literary "stardom" are tracked; her contradictory relations with decadence, modernism, and feminism are teasingly uncovered.

Marie Corelli was Victorian England's most popular novelist. Today, her works are available from a publisher of "Rare Esoterica and Masonic Reprints."

Since she is essentially writing a critical biography (with a strong dash of Victorian cultural criticism), Federico can allow herself the luxury of extended analysis of what she takes to be the central texts. Most valuable for those who are tempted to investigate the Corelli oeuvre is Federico's lucid and sympathetic reading of *The Sorrows of Satan* (although, I confess, I find the suggestion of a homoerotic connection between two central characters as unconvincing as the author would have found it outrageous). It is worth flagging this as a useful point of entry since *The Sorrows of Satan* is, for the modern reader, the most available Corelli text.

The Idol of Suburbia presents Corelli's life and literary achievement in a new and—as Federico puts it—"friendly" light. What with this book, and Ransom's, it may be that posterity is at last being nice to Marie. I'll believe it when they change the name of Mason Croft to "The Shakespeare-Corelli Institute."

John Sutherland is a professor of English at University College, London. His latest book is *Who Betrays Elizabeth Bennet?* (Oxford, 1999).

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The Pocockiad

BY DAVID ARMITAGE

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BACK IN THE HALCYON days of pre-postmodernity, we knew what Enlightenment was: It was rational and reformist, skeptical and secular, French and *philosophe*. Whether seen as the construction of "the heavenly city of the eighteenth-century philosophers" (by Carl Becker) or "the rise of modern paganism" (by Peter Gay), the Enlightenment promised human liberation from superstition, absolutism, and the dead hand of dogma. But two generations of philosophers—from Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno to Michel Foucault and beyond—have challenged this received idea. Nowadays, the Enlightenment is a project, and we know that universalism leads only to conformity. Its most characteristic institution was therefore not the salon but the panopticon.

While philosophers were exposing these dark legacies, historians were reconstructing a number of diverse Enlightenments, both metropolitan and provincial, in St. Petersburg and Williamsburg, Lisbon and Edinburgh, Naples and Uppsala. Eighteenth-century England has been more or less absent from these revisions. Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton may be considered among the founding fathers of the Age of Reason, but the later era of Samuel Johnson was evidently too Tory to be revolutionary, too Anglican to be anticlerical, and too reasonable to be truly rationalist. The exception who proved the rule was Edward Gibbon, the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In the judgment of the historian Franco Venturi, Gibbon was "the English giant of the Enlightenment," albeit one whose skepticism, Francophilia, and cosmopolitan erudition rendered him "a solitary figure in his own country." Gibbon played no part in English political reform or protest, spent much of his adult life abroad, remained silent on the question of the decline and fall of the British Empire after 1776 (even though he sat in Parliament during America's Revolutionary War), and was positively Burkean in his dyspeptic reaction to the "new barbarians" of the French Revolution. It has been easier to ignore Gibbon than to assimilate him to the standard intepretations of the Enlightenment, and this has left the English apparently unenlightened and the Enlightenment with no great English representative.

J.G.A. Pocock would like to rectify this situation. The first two volumes of *Barbarism and Religion* launch an ambitious effort to examine the Enlightenment through Gibbon's eyes. Like all of Pocock's major works—from his study of seventeenth-century English legal thought in *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (1957) to his influential reconstruction of the politics of civic virtue in *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975)—these volumes place changing modes of historical consciousness into highly detailed social and political contexts.

The first volume, *The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737–1764*, traces Gibbon's early life in Anglican England, through his adolescent years in Lausanne (where he was sent to be cured of a youthful bout of Roman Catholicism), to his service in the English militia, his sojourns in the salons of Paris, and on to the conception of the *Decline and Fall* itself in 1764. The Enlightenments that Gibbon knew were Protestant, skeptical, and martial. Though the forms varied according to setting—Bourbon France, Georgian England, Calvinist Switzerland—the aims were consistent: to defang every species of religious enthusiasm, to replace "the authority inherent in the text by the study of the human mind or minds that had produced it," and to elevate reason from a mere instrument of political reform into the ground of orderly consensus.

THESE ENLIGHTENMENTS harmonized because they shared a common origin in recent religious disputes. But the champions of Enlightenment also shared more antique preoccupations. Medieval Christianity and feudalism were the historical nightmare from which Europe had finally awoken in Gibbon's lifetime; they now belonged to a past whose history Gibbon and his contemporaries could recount. In his second volume, *Narratives of Civil Government*, Pocock traces the emergence of an "Enlightened narrative" of modernity in the titans of eighteenth-century historicism—not all of them necessarily historians—best

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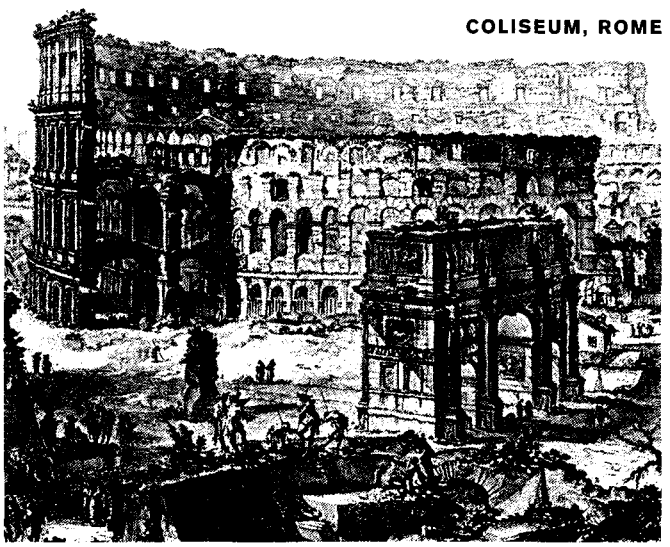
known to Gibbon: the Neapolitan Pietro Giannone; Voltaire; and the Scotsmen David Hume, William Robertson, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson. These writers told a narrative with obscure beginnings, an extensive middle (the "Christian millennium," which stretched either from Constantine to the emperor Charles V, or from Charlemagne to Louis XIV), and a recent, salutary modern end. "Church had replaced empire," and then ruled for a thousand benighted years, "until the monarchies of France and England had restored the primacy of civil society." One of the greatest triumphs in this genre was Robertson's *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1769), which garnered what was then the largest advance ever paid for a history: a sure sign that readers as well as writers wanted enlightened narrative during what Hume called "the historical age."

Among the enlightened enterprises, Gibbon's history was unique. By starting in late antiquity and ending with the fall of Byzantium in 1453, while "barbarism and religion" still reigned triumphant, the *Decline and Fall* refused to tell the story of the rise of modern freedom. By choice, Gibbon never reached the modern world—the civil, commercial, postimperial, postfeudal, and postecclesiastical international order of the eighteenth century. Instead, he took two steps back from modernity, to a late antiquity that included much of Asia and the Muslim world. The boundaries of Gibbon's history were those of the far-flung Roman Empire itself; he put as much emphasis on its eastern territories as on the west. According to Pocock, he produced "a world history written on a Eurasian...scale."

THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES of Pocock's *Barbarism and Religion* recall the early volumes of the *Decline and Fall* by the striking absence of their subject. Gibbon's history has so far appeared only in allusions and passing references. Pocock is aware of such parallels with Gibbon's own work, even to the point of some identification with Gibbon himself. Pocock tells us that he conceived his history in Rome's Piazza Paganica, in a scene reminiscent of the famous genesis of Gibbon's work in 1764 "at Rome...as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter."



COLISEUM, ROME

Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was a unique Enlightenment text: It refused to tell the story of the rise of modern freedom.

As with the *Decline and Fall*, the grandeur of Pocock's conception amazes, but it is often the asides and aperçus that linger longest in the mind. A succinct portrait may summarize decades of scholarship, as when Pocock describes the Church of England as bedeviled by "the central difficulties of maintaining both its apostolic and its statutory foundations, of reconciling the spirit with the law, grace with works, revelation with social reason." A verdict such as "Enlightened culture, like the Enlightened state, was in many ways secularized baroque" could inspire decades of scholarship more.

In five pages on public space in seventeenth-century England, Pocock offers a more suggestive account of the peculiar intimacy of state and civil society than anyone else could provide in fifty, relating the lack of an overbearing absolutism, the prominence of the press, the distinctive "interplay between court, city, and country," and the growth of a reading public (much of it female) in the eighteenth century. Pocock reaffirms the centrality of the Seven Years War (1756–1763) to eighteenth-century historiography by tracing most of the great enlightened histories back to the conflict, which Gibbon experienced as "captain of the Hampshire grenadiers." Passages like these are the more than incidental rewards for consuming these two volumes whole.

IN THE CLOSING PAGES OF *Narratives of Civil Government*, Pocock notes that Gibbon found his masterpiece "easier to envisage than execute" and quotes the historian's gloomy opinion that the later volumes of the *Decline and Fall* were "more prolix and less entertaining than the first." Pocock balances this with his own judgment that once Gibbon found his voice and method, "things of extraordinary richness and diversity began to happen," though he "found difficulty in explaining [his] project to others, even perhaps to himself." In the end, Gibbon's hermetic brilliance "has left him a very great figure, but one very selectively read."

Such judgments may hint at Pocock's own hopes and fears for *Barbarism and Religion*, another multivolume magnum opus as yet incomplete, unfulfilled, and fragmentary, with its central subject announced but after more than seven hundred pages only barely introduced. The real payoff lies ahead, in the promised analysis of the *Decline and Fall* itself as an enlightened history. If Pocock is pleading with his readers (and his publisher) for patience and indulgence, then he is amply entitled to do so. There's this consolation: While they wait, his readers will have plenty of time to read (or reread) the *Decline and Fall*.

David Armitage is an associate professor of history at Columbia University and the author of *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

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MONKEYS WHO THINK

AND THE COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENTIST WHO LOVES THEM

BY **JENNIFER SCHUESSLER**

IN THE SUMMER OF 1980, MARC HAUSER WAS A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD animal-behavior major with a summer job cleaning cages at a Florida tourist attraction called Monkey Jungle. One day, he noticed a female spider monkey staring at him with unusual intensity. Hauser moved closer; the monkey reached through the bars of her cage, wrapped both hands around his neck, and cooed, gazing deep into his eyes for several minutes. When her mate neared, she swatted him away before resuming her attentions to Hauser.

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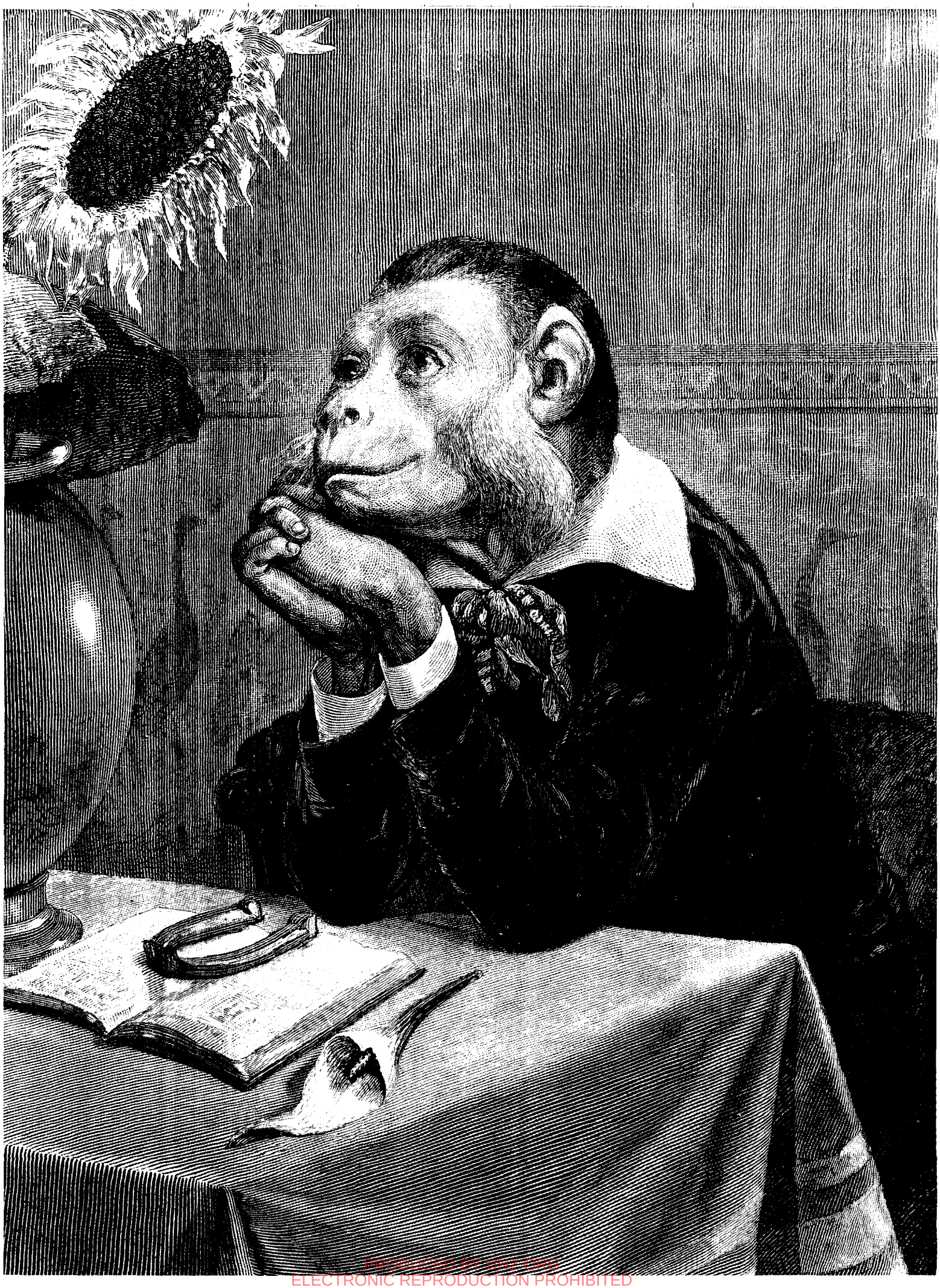

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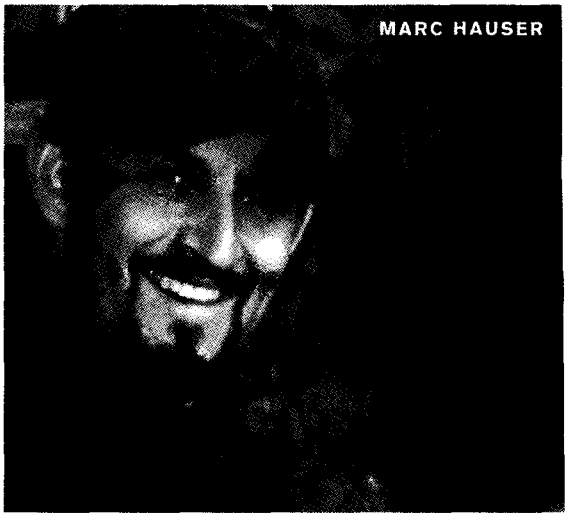
What was she thinking and feeling? Hauser wondered. His efforts to investigate came to nothing. The brief encounter turned out to be just a one-afternoon stand. Although Hauser approached the spider monkey's cage several more times that summer, she never responded to the hairless primate's advances.

Such a story of uncanny interspecies connection would seem to fit right in to the pages of recent popular accounts of animals and their amazingly humanlike thoughts and emotions—books like Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's *The Hidden Life of Dogs* or Jeffrey Masson's *When Elephants Weep*. Instead, the tale kicks off Hauser's challenge to such authors and to what he sees as their lazy anthropomorphism and occasional antiscience bias. In his new book, *Wild Minds: What Animals Really Think* (Holt), the Harvard psychology professor brings Darwinian theory and empirical rigor to bear on a subject often clouded by both popular gullibility and scientists' disdain.

Evolution, Hauser argues, has endowed even the lowliest of the beasts with rich mental lives, thanks to a "universal toolkit" of basic cognitive abilities, plus whatever conceptual hammers, wrenches, and measuring sticks each species needs in order to make a living in its ecological niche. An unsurprising thesis, perhaps, now that the runaway success of such books as Steven Pinker's *The Language Instinct* and *How the Mind Works* has sold many lay readers on the Darwinian, modular view of the mind. Hauser, in fact, embraces the label "evolutionary psychologist." But as he sees it, popularizers of evolutionary psychology sometimes rely too heavily on ingenious theoretical arguments and concern themselves too little with the bedeviling details. Rather than offering firm answers, *Wild Minds* delves into the messy, difficult business of bringing animal thinking out of the realm of just-so stories and into that of solid empirical research.

Hauser is hardly the first to try to knock Thomas, Masson, and company off the bookshelf. *Wild Minds* is one of several recent dispatches bringing the lay reader news from an increasingly visible field sometimes known as cognitive ethology. A three-part documentary called *Inside the Animal Mind* aired on U.S. public television this winter. Last November, when the psychologist Irene Pepperberg published *The Alex Papers*, an account of her twenty-two-year study of an African gray parrot's ability to grasp such concepts as number and color, she made the front page of *The New York Times*. Other recent books on the topic include Steven Budiansky's *If a Lion Could Talk*, James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould's *The Animal Mind*, and Marian Stamp Dawkins's *Through Our Eyes Only?*

To its advocates, the rise of cognitive ethology reflects a regaining of consciousness after a dark half century of behaviorist orthodoxy, which held that all behavior, animal or human, was the result not of mental events but of conditioned responses to external stimuli. Cognitive ethologists trace their assumptions back to Charles Darwin, who insisted that animals and humans exhibit no less evolutionary continuity in their minds than in their kidneys, hearts, and toes. The field's critics, however, suspect that talk of animal thinking and intention may owe less to Darwin than to the embarrassing and dubiously anecdotal mentalism of his protégé Georges Romanes, a popular lecturer who saw logisticating dogs and conniving felines under every Victorian armchair.


MARC HAUSER

Animals, of course, can't tell us what they think. It's a measure of the difficulty of reading wild minds that many in the field—including Hauser, the subtitle of his book notwithstanding—reject the use of such terms as "thinking," "intelligence," and "consciousness" in favor of the less vague and less inflammatory "cognition." But that hasn't stopped Hauser from developing provocative arguments likely to give readers pause, whether they see animals as cuddly little humans or mindless creatures of instinct.

HAUSER'S office is on the ninth floor of Harvard's William James Hall, the building where the arch-behaviorist B.F. Skinner shared his quarters with maze-running rats and bar-pecking pigeons until his death in 1990. Hauser himself presides over a lab population of two dozen students; six vervet monkeys, all named for jazz musicians; and seventeen cotton-topped tamarins, named for such colleagues and friends as Pinker, Tufts philosopher Daniel Dennett, and Harvard anthropologist Irven DeVore (with whom Hauser co-teaches one of the most popular courses on campus, "Human Behavioral Biology," informally known as "Sex").

Slight and boyish at forty, sporting a goatee, turtleneck, and clogs, Hauser comes off more like an earnestly enthusiastic lab jockey than a recently tenured professor who has just attempted to write the book on animal minds. He's partial to words like "fun," "neat," and "wacky," and he takes the time to respond politely to "vicious" e-mail from a dog owner enraged by an excerpt from *Wild Minds* that appeared in *Discover* magazine (the dog owner insists that his pooch can count to six; Hauser's research has revealed that animal numeracy tops out at three or four).

"Talking about animals is a great way of demystifying science gently," he says. "One of the great things about the field is a lot of it is so low-tech you can almost do it with your pets."

For all his popularizing zeal, Hauser hasn't shied away from tweaking orthodoxy within his field. One of his pet projects has been to retool classic experiments in order to suggest that monkeys might be more than the dumber cousins of the great apes that they are sometimes presumed to be. Making frequent trips to Cayo Santiago, Puerto Rico, where he studies free-ranging rhesus monkeys, he is one of the few researchers to examine animals in both the lab and the field. "The real beauty," says Hauser, "is the marriage between field-

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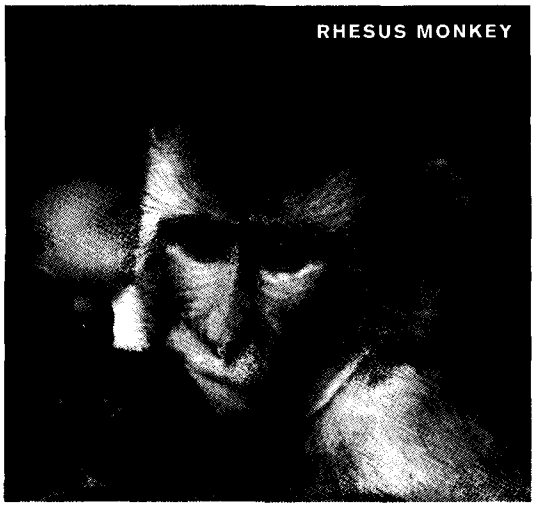
work, where you see the true ecological and social problems that have shaped animal minds, and lab experiments, where you can get more control."

Hauser was born in 1959 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where his father was a graduate student in physics at Harvard. A self-described jock who was mostly interested in "having fun," he majored in animal behavior at Bucknell, which was the only college in the country to offer such a program. His first course, based on E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology,* introduced him to the adaptationist point of view. Soon he found himself puzzling over philosophical conundrums involving animals. There



RHESUS MONKEY

was Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous dictum, "If a lion could talk, we would not be able to understand him." Then there was the twist on that idea by the ape researcher David Premack, who postulated, "If a chicken had grammar, it wouldn't have anything interesting to say." Finally, there was the philosopher Thomas Nagel's famous 1974 essay, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" While it was certainly like *something* to be a bat, Nagel concluded, a description of the bat's inner world remained beyond reach. "It seemed to me at the time that any one of these ideas might be right," Hauser recalls.

Despite its pessimism, Nagel's essay played a crucial role in the development of cognitive ethology. Legend has it that Nagel wrote the essay after attending a lecture by the co-discoverer of echolocation, the zoologist Donald Griffin, who sometimes released bats in his lecture halls to dramatize their ability to navigate by sonar. Griffin, in turn, was inspired by Nagel to write *The Question of Animal Awareness* (1976), the first in a suite of books that would challenge the behaviorist line and launch the field of cognitive ethology, a phrase Griffin coined. Griffin's *Animal Thinking,* published in 1984, gathered together the mounting but neglected evidence that animals from baboons to bees to shrimp often act in ways that suggest planning, intent, and awareness of other minds.

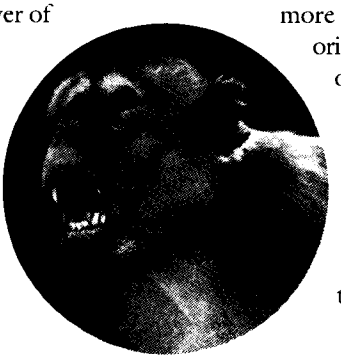
Had the eminent scholar lost his mind? Reviewing Griffin's 1992 follow-up volume, *Animal Minds,* in *The New York Times Book Review,* the philosopher Helena Cronin declared that Griffin had come out as "a sentimental softie." The psychologist Hank Davis, a fierce defender of behaviorism, likened his heresies to Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses.* Puzzling even to some of Griffin's sympathizers—Hauser included—was his insistence on seeing "consciousness" behind ordinary instances of intelligent behavior. Some have expressed particular bafflement at Griffin's suggestion that consciousness might help compensate for the limited storage and processing power of small-brained creatures.

Griffin's observations opened rich new areas for empirical research. In the late 1970s, the primatologists Robert Seyfarth and Dorothy Cheney, a husband-and-wife team at the University of California at Los Angeles, were among the first to take up the challenge. In Kenya's Amboseli game preserve, Cheney and Seyfarth, in collaboration with ethologist Peter Marler, conducted the definitive research on one of the most astounding discoveries in animal communication—that vervets had an elaborate system of referential alarm calls that seemed to function almost like words. For example, on seeing a snake, eagle, or leopard, a vervet emits a distinct call that prompts other troop members to take appropriate action. On hearing the "snake" alarm, troop members stand on their hind legs and survey the surrounding grass. On hearing "eagle," they hide under a tree. "Leopard" sends them scrambling into the tree's branches.

Sometimes the monkeys even use these calls deceptively—to gain the advantage in a skirmish by suddenly scaring a rival monkey up a tree, for example. (Whether such deception is truly intentional, however, is a matter of considerable ongoing debate.) Cheney and Seyfarth also discovered that despite this vocabulary, vervets were remarkably oblivious to certain aspects of their environment. They would immediately give the "snake" alarm call on seeing a snake, but the sight of a freshly laid python track seemed not to disturb them at all.

In 1982 Hauser, then a graduate student, joined Cheney and Seyfarth in the field. His dissertation would build on their research. Focusing on vervet development, Hauser examined how the infant monkeys learned to heed the less specific alarm calls that starlings issued to one another. But even as he was pursuing this research, he was restless. He and some fellow graduate students organized a seminar around the question of whether behavioral ecology—the traditional study of animal behavior in the wild—was "dead." As he explains it, "We all started realizing that while the field was still exciting, people were really just finding more evidence for existing theories in different species, kind of dotting i's and crossing t's." Some of the students began fusing evolutionary theory with molecular biology. Others, like Hauser, dug deeper into neurobiology and the cognitive sciences.

WORKING WITH MONKEYS, MARC HAUSER SETS OUT TO CHALLENGE WHAT HE SEES AS THE LAZY SENTIMENTALITY OF POPULAR WRITING ABOUT ANIMALS.



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THIS TURN toward neuroscience brought Hauser closer to Peter Marler, his mentors' mentor and his own hero in the field since 1970. A schoolboy at the time, Hauser had been impressed by Marler's seminal *Scientific American* article laying out the basic principles for comparing animal communication and human speech. In 1988, Hauser began a postdoctoral fellowship with Marler at Rockefeller University. At that point, Marler and his associates were overturning some cherished notions. For example, many researchers had held that although both humans and animals had anatomic brain asymmetries, only in humans were these asymmetries functional. Not so, Marler discovered. Japanese macaques, in fact, processed auditory signals better through their right ears (connected to the left side of the brain), in much the same way that humans favor their right ears for listening.

Hauser added some interesting findings to this foundation. In 1993, working on Cayo Santiago, he found that the facial expressions of rhesus monkeys began on the left side of the face, indicating that the right hemisphere of the brain was in control. In humans, positive expressions, such as smiling, begin on the right, while negative ones, such as those indicating fear or surprise, begin on the left. Adult rhesus monkeys, oddly, only have negative expressions, Hauser argues. Even the male's copulation grimace, he says, reflects an emotion that is mixed at best, given the intensely stressful and competitive mating situation, in which high-ranking males often drive off subordinates in the middle of the act.

Such observations made their way into Hauser's 1996 book, *The Evolution of Communication* (MIT), a 760-page survey of signals ranging from birdsong and bat echolocation to firefly flashes and primate facial expressions. Reviewers for such journals as *American Anthropologist* and *Evolution* remarked on the book's ambition, clarity, and verve, not to mention the fifteen-hundred-item bibliography. Not all linguists, however, appreciated the comparative perspective on human language. Derek Bickerton of the University of Hawaii, writing in *Nature,* chided Hauser for underplaying the significance of syntax, which in his view crucially distinguishes human language from birdsong and the like. Furthermore, he argued, vervet calls are not really comparable to words and thus cannot be taken to suggest that human language evolved from animal precursors.

Such reactions did not surprise Hauser. In the early 1990s, he recalls, he had the "disturbing realization" that people working on human language and cognition were not interested in comparable behavior in animals. "I remember giving these talks to people who worked on humans," Hauser says. "You could tell they enjoyed hearing about animals, but it didn't really have any impact on their thinking. Although these findings on vervet communication were absolutely fundamental, linguists would write them off as not relevant to human language evolution, and cognitive scientists would see the experiment as irrelevant because it was done in the wild, using different methods."

WAS IT even possible, Hauser wondered, to interest researchers in a collaboration across the species divide? The key, he came to believe, lay in studying animals and human infants with the same techniques. At a 1992 comparative cognition conference at Cornell, Hauser attended a talk by the developmental psychologist Renée Baillargeon, a pioneer of the so-called looking-time technique. Researchers using this method would stage a sort of magic show, observing infants to see how long they looked at phenomena that were consistent with the logical properties of the world versus those that were inconsistent. Using this technique, researchers were busy dismantling the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget's ideas about the ages at which infants grasped such concepts as object permanence. The technique, however, had yet to cross over into the animal kingdom. "The logic was so simple and elegant," Hauser says, "I thought, I can use this on any animal."

Hauser applied looking-time technique in his investigation of animal numeracy. The developmental psychologist Karen Wynn had already shown that five-month-olds understand such simple arithmetic problems as 1+1=2. On Cayo Santiago, Hauser staged a version of her experiment in which he showed his monkeys two bright-purple eggplants, then covered the eggplants momentarily with a screen. Once the screen was removed, the monkeys looked longer when one eggplant had mysteriously disappeared than when both remained. In another experiment, Hauser allowed the monkeys to choose between two boxes containing different quantities of fruit. Up to four versus three, they consistently went for the bigger snack—but they were unable to distinguish between larger quantities.

"What's beautiful about this," Hauser says, "is that it matches precisely what's found for human infants up to a year and it matches precisely what's encoded in all natural human languages. All languages have words for one, two, and three, but often after that it's just 'more.'" The basic sense of number, he argues, got wired into the brain before humans diverged from other mammals. (In one of the few tossed-off speculations in *Wild Minds,* Hauser suggests that trade among humans produced the selective pressure in favor of our more precise counting systems.)

Nonetheless, Hauser and his students remain pretty much alone in applying looking-time technique to animal studies. Some critics ask how one can tell what animals are looking at in the field, especially since, in order to avoid any chance of learning, the experiments are limited to one trial per animal. "Yes, it's an uncontrolled situation," Hauser says. "There are a thousand monkeys on the island, there are animals fighting or playing. But we run huge samples—it's not just the study of Alex the parrot or Kanzi the bonobo. If the effect is robust, the variations are going to wash out. If it's vulnerable, we

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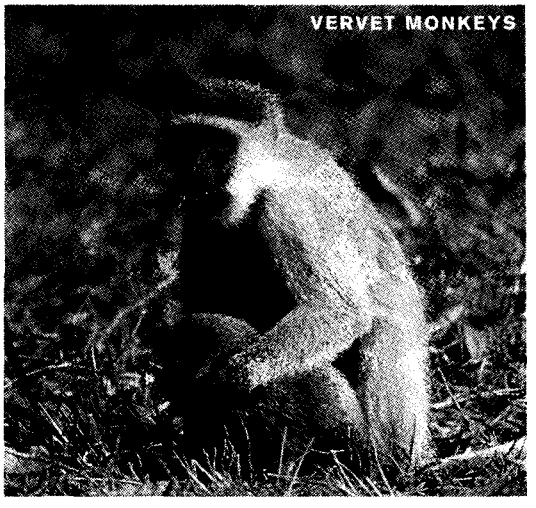
get nothing. But we get really consistent results. When we get an effect, it's huge."

Hauser is so confident of his numeracy results that he includes a basic sense of number in the innate universal tool kit he proposes in *Wild Minds*. Also in the tool kit are an understanding of the characteristics of animate versus inanimate objects and, more spectacularly, the ability to navigate through space. Many animals can find their way by means of "dead reckoning"—as when homing pigeons fly hundreds of miles over unfamiliar territory by the constantly shifting stars. Some animals, Hauser argues, also have the benefit of "cognitive maps," mental representations of their territory based on its basic geometry and landmarks. Some researchers have conducted studies suggesting that birds may understand such abstract, relative concepts as above, below, and middle—notions that some scholars have argued are dependent on language. Hauser has preliminary results indicating that tamarins may also possess these concepts.


VERVET MONKEYS

When it comes to the question of language, Hauser is cautious in making strong claims for animals. He notes that Sue Savage-Rumbaugh's controversial results with the bonobo Kanzi suggest that apes may be capable of acquiring a sort of protogrammar. He also acknowledges that we haven't gotten very far in decoding the signals that primates other than vervets use in the wild. Indeed, Hauser and the Harvard anthropologist Richard Wrangham are currently researching chimp vocalizations. At the same time, Hauser says, whatever the complexity of the chimp mind, there aren't enough "bits" of data in these grunt-exchanges to suggest that the animals are having full-blown conversations—say, about the peculiar behavior of the primatologists crouching by the bushes. "I feel pretty confident saying that the level of information exchanged is nowhere near the richness of the animals' social relationships or their representations of objects in the world," he says. "There's just no way."

Ultimately, he speculates that animals are something akin to Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis": "severely handicapped" in their ability to say what's on their minds. "These animals are whipping along with all these concepts and no vehicle to express them with," he explains. "Once that language capacity evolved in humans, what a revolution that must have been. Suddenly, all this stuff that's inside can be put outside."

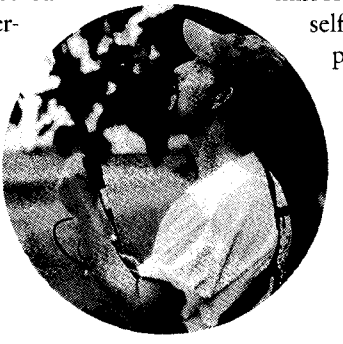
HAUSER BELIEVES THAT ANIMALS HAVE A READY ABILITY TO COUNT TO THREE, DISTINGUISH ANIMATE FROM INANIMATE OBJECTS, AND FIND THEIR WAY HOME.

WHETHER or not animals can be said to possess language, one can still ask: Do animals have self-awareness? Do they have beliefs? What do they understand about other animals' minds? Are they moral? *Wild Minds* gives these issues ample consideration, but Hauser is clearly peeved that fixation on such higher-order investigations lets chimps hog the limelight. "First, there's this idea that humans are special and animals are not. In primatology, there's the idea that chimps are special and all other apes and monkeys are not. It's true, on some of the big questions, the most interesting research has been done on chimps." But in a chimpocentric world, he says, work on monkeys often gets "sideswiped."

Even on the big questions, Hauser has been trying to get his colleagues to give monkeys a closer look. In 1994 he reran Gordon Gallup's classic 1970 experiment showing that chimpanzees are able to recognize themselves in mirrors. When their heads were marked with a red dot, most of the chimps that looked in the mirror would immediately touch the mark on their heads, sometimes then sniffing their fingers. Since then, researchers have found that orangutans and bonobos—but never monkeys—are similarly able to recognize their reflections. (Curiously, only one gorilla—Koko, the celebrity signing ape—has ever passed the test.)

The experiments, Hauser argued, failed to account for certain of the monkeys' species-specific attributes. Tamarins, for example, which diverged from the human and ape evolutionary line some fifty million years ago, have virtually no facial expressions and do not attend to the face as much as apes do. Therefore, he reasoned, relatively subtle markings like a small dot on their dark skin are unlikely to interest them. So Hauser used a much stronger mark, coloring his cotton-topped tamarins' spectacular tuft of white hair with flamingo-pink Manic Panic dye. Before the dye was applied, tamarins paid only brief attention to their mirrored selves. But on this extreme bad hair day, they gazed into the mirror at length, most of them touching their hair at least once.

Hauser's findings set off a testy exchange with Gallup, who criticized his experimental design and rickety data. In *Wild Minds*, Hauser admits that when he reran the tests adjusting for various criticisms, the monkeys exhibited a "general failure." Still, he insists, "this should not be interpreted as evidence that tamarins lack self-recognition." Besides, Hauser says, his point was not just to stick up for monkeys but to argue that the mirror test is "the wrong test" of self-awareness. He cites the perplexing case of people with prosopagnosia, a rare condition that leaves a person unable to recognize her own face in a mirror. There is no evidence, he argues, that such



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people lack self-awareness. Mirror self-recognition, therefore, does not tell us anything about animals' "sense of self"—much less whether they are conscious, or have an awareness of death, as some have gone so far as to suggest.

Still, Hauser is willing to indulge in some admittedly whimsical speculation on the question. In 1997 he observed rhesus monkeys on Cayo Santiago staring with fascination at pieces of a broken mirror. On his Web site, he suggests that the mobility of these mirrors may have enabled the monkeys to recognize themselves. "The logic might run like this: I am holding a mirror in my hand. There is another monkey's face. It can't be another monkey because I am not carrying one. It must be me."

IF WE CAN'T be sure whether animals are aware of themselves, it might seem even more difficult to determine whether they are aware of each other. Might primates be said to have a "theory of mind"? The term, coined by the ape researcher David Premack in 1978, generally refers to the recognition that others have beliefs and that these beliefs can differ from one's own.

Although Premack's notion initially didn't spark much additional work with apes, developmental psychologists took it up with alacrity. In a classic test, a child watches while one puppet, named Sally, places a ball in a basket in the presence of another puppet, Anne. At that point, Sally leaves the room, and the child sees Anne move the ball to a box. When Sally returns, the child is asked where Sally will look for the ball. Four-year-olds will correctly indicate the basket, the original hiding place. They understand that Sally has no way of knowing that the ball has been moved. Younger children, however, think Sally will look in the box. It seems they cannot distinguish between what they know about the situation and what Sally knows. That is, they have no theory of mind.

Primate research into such questions picked up in the late 1980s. Some writers, surveying the literature, conclude that the great apes, like four-year-olds, have a theory of mind: They can grasp that others may have false beliefs. But in *Wild Minds* Hauser is much more skeptical. He cites, for example, one of a suite of experiments by Daniel Povinelli in which chimpanzees gestured for food just as often from trainers wearing bags over their heads or blindfolds over their eyes as from those with bags just to the side of their heads or blindfolds over their mouths. They don't seem to grasp the connection between seeing and knowing—in other words, that someone who can't see them begging doesn't know they are there.

As badly as Povinelli's chimps tested, a control group of rhesus monkeys did even worse. But as Hauser points out, the ordinary monkeys were competing against an ape "dream team"—animals that had been "enculturated" through language training and intense exposure to human artifacts and situations. At the same time, he acknowledges, monkeys may not have much need for a theory of mind. Since their family groups tend not to break into smaller units, as chimps' do, and they are almost never alone, individuals rarely differ substantially in what they know.

Despite his general doubts as to whether primates have a theory of mind, Hauser

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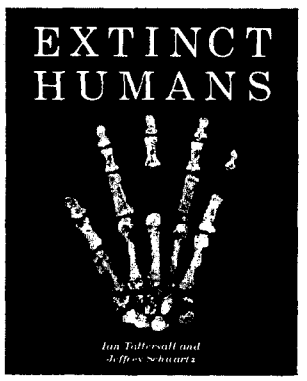

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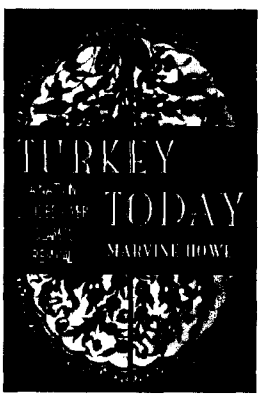

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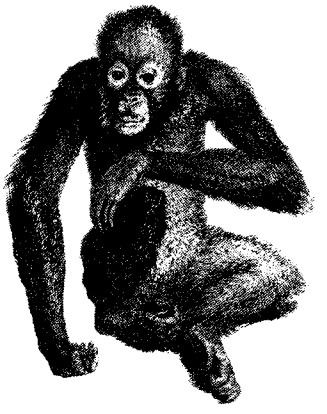
nonetheless offers some tentative evidence that tamarins may nominally understand that other minds can hold false beliefs. In designing a nonverbal version of the Sally-Anne test for tamarins, Hauser took a cue from the developmental psychologists Wendy Clements and Josef Perner of the University of Sussex. This duo had observed that in the classic test with human infants, before the three-year-olds answered, incorrectly, that Sally would look in the second hiding place, they would spend a moment looking at the first hiding place (where the returning Sally ought to think the ball remained). Perhaps the younger children implicitly understood that Sally held a false belief, Hauser speculated, even if they couldn't express their understanding explicitly, in words. (As the cognitive scientist in Hauser puts it, "Somewhere along the path from looking to speaking, there is a computational error.")

In Hauser's test, which he carried out with his graduate student Laurie Santos, a tamarin watches as Joe enters a room. Joe eats part of an apple, hands the tamarin a piece, and then puts the rest in one of two opaque boxes. When Joe leaves, the experimenter moves the apple into the second box. Joe returns and looks for the apple. The tamarins stared longer when Joe, against logic, looked in the second box, even though he hadn't seen the apple being moved.

The paper has yet to be published in a scientific journal. One critic has expressed doubts about the validity of the looking-time method for infants, let alone primates. Another asked, since we know apes don't have a theory of mind, why should we think monkeys do? Hauser calls this a "really weird" phylogenetic claim. "You wouldn't say, 'Humans don't have echolocation, so why should bats?' We know evolution works in weird ways."

Curiously, Hauser makes no mention of his theory-of-mind results with tamarins in *Wild Minds*. "I didn't want to give the impression that all it required was this one intelligent experiment by Hauser to show that the field was all wrong," he says. "I tried really hard not to promote things I didn't think were really solid." He mentions the best-selling books of his close friend Steven Pinker. "Steve is a very forceful writer. If you read *The Language Instinct*, you think, 'Oh we've got the problem of language acquisition solved.' But in fact we don't. And reading *How the Mind Works*, you might think evolutionary psychology has all the answers, but there's so much controversy in that field it's outrageous." For example, Pinker makes a powerful case for the "cheater detector," or the idea that humans have a built-in module for sniffing out deceivers. However, Hauser protests, "there's also so much counterevidence" that isn't discussed.

ALTHOUGH HAUSER THINKS THAT ANIMALS HAVE RICH EMOTIONAL LIVES, HE DOUBTS THAT THEY CAN TRULY EMPATHIZE WITH ONE ANOTHER. ANIMALS APPEAR TO GRIEVE BUT NOT TO COMFORT OTHERS IN GRIEF.



Nonetheless, Hauser's notion of the mind as a collection of tools puts him squarely on Pinker's side of the fence. Not all researchers in primate—let alone human—cognition embrace this view. In his new book, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Michael Tomasello of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology argues that language and other specialized skills don't reflect specialized modules. Rather, they spring from one simple, "uniquely human biological adaptation." What's important is not the full-blown understanding of false beliefs that emerges at around three and a half but what he calls "the nine-month revolution"—the understanding that others are intentional agents "like me" that emerges toward the end of the first year. It is this understanding that allows us to share "joint attention" with another person and to learn what they know.

One of the most surprising differences between humans and other animals—one Hauser also emphasizes—is that only humans seem capable of true imitation. That is, imitation not just of another's actions but of his or her underlying intentions. Apes don't truly ape, and the monkey that sees doesn't necessarily do. In Tomasello's opinion, this unique human ability to understand the intentions of others is what made science possible. Understanding of invisible causal forces like "intentions" and "thoughts" evolved first to explain and predict the behavior of other people. It was then "transported" to explain the behavior of inanimate objects influenced by forces such as gravity. Strangely, our knowledge of physics and chemistry may flow from our innate grasp of psychology.

PERHAPS even more surprisingly, experiments with physics may help elucidate some of the more mysterious aspects of animal psychology, including the vexed question of where in the branching tree of evolution morality begins. Ever the empiricist, Hauser offers an arresting line of argument based on two very simple concepts. In one experiment, two-year-old children or adult tamarins watched a researcher drop an object down an S-shaped pipe running diagonally toward a box. Both the kids and the monkeys looked for the object directly below the point where the object was released—and not in the box, where the tube ended. They did this not just once but twenty or thirty times in a row.

Children and tamarins are vulnerable to what Hauser calls "Kuhnian perseverance," or repeating an action because their theoretical framework—in this case, a "gravity bias"—drives them to do so. They are also constrained by what he calls "Cartesian perseverance." According to Descartes, rationality requires control over passionate impulses—and animals are incapable of exercising such control. As a result, animals will sometimes make the same passion-based blunders over and over again. Hauser cites experiments in which chimps and macaques, faced with a hand or box holding four treats and one holding a single treat, always picked the four treats, even when the rule of the game was that they would get whatever serving they didn't pick.

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A FORMER PROFESSOR, JEFFREY M. DUBAN RECEIVED HIS PH.D. IN CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY FROM JOHNS HOPKINS IN 1975.

Morality would seem to have little to do with pellets of food dropping down a tube. But such experiments, Hauser argues, show why animals, like children, have no role in shaping rules of conduct. "To make an ethical decision," he writes, "...we must choose between two or more alternative possibilities. Sometimes the most tempting possibility is the wrong thing to do."

Although Hauser believes animals have rich emotional lives, his skepticism that animals have a true sense of self leads him to reject the notion that animals experience empathy—that is, that they not only know what other animals feel but also share in those feelings. Indeed, while there are some reports of primates appearing to grieve for the dead, there are virtually none of primates acting to comfort those in grief. But given Hauser's tendency to find evidence among his monkeys for things he's not sure he believes in more generally, perhaps it's not surprising that he's devising an experiment for empathy.

The experiment will be an "ethical" version of those, conducted in the 1940s and 1950s, that examined rats' willingness to give each other nasty shocks if it meant gaining access to food. In his primate version, Hauser will play recordings of a monkey in serious distress to other monkeys. If a listening monkey exhibits neurobiological signs of distress along with an appropriate behavioral response, Hauser will consider calling it empathy.

In a way, empathy is where Hauser departs most clearly from Jeffrey Masson and Elizabeth Marshall Thomas. The moral goodness of animals is precisely what books like *When Elephants Weep* and *The Hidden Life of Dogs* insist on, often with great eloquence. Some psychologists have pointed out that it is humans' own considerable ability to empathize that leads us to anthropomorphize animals—not to mention cranky computers, stalled car engines, and forces of nature. Can Hauser's book help spark a Kuhnian paradigm shift in the way the common reader conceives of animal minds? Perhaps. After all, his work gives ample reason to respect animal minds without presuming they are exactly like ours.

Jennifer Schuessler is an assistant editor at *The New York Review of Books*. Her article "The Visionary Company" appeared in the December/January 1999 *LF*.

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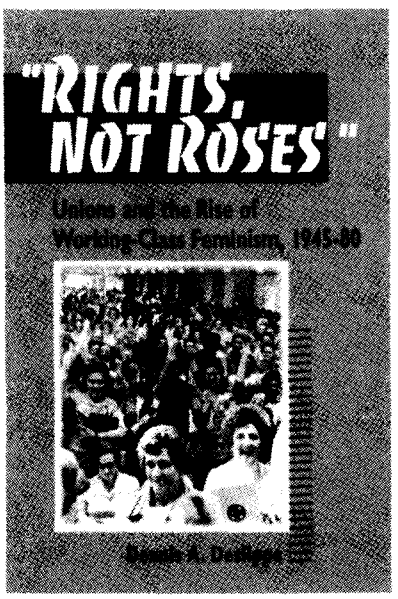
WOMEN AT WORK



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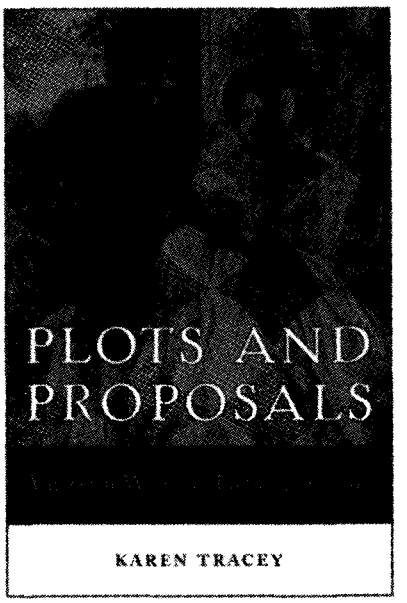

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continued from page 7

tion in order to trick Western diplomats and to simulate a "democratic Serbia" on the international political scene. In this endeavor, Milosevic received significant help from the irresponsible leaders of the so-called democratic opposition in Serbia, to which professor Stojanovic belongs.

OBRAD SAVIC
Acting President of the Belgrade Circle NGO
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

REGRETFULLY, LBJ

In Paul Mitchinson's "All the Presidents' Tapes" [February], in *New York Times* Op-Eds, and elsewhere, a mushy-headed rehabilitation of Lyndon Johnson's gruesome Vietnam policy is taking place. We are now told by people like George McGovern, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Taylor Branch that Johnson *felt bad* about what he was doing in Vietnam. Poor fellow! This judgment seems more appropriate to an *Oprah* show than to serious history. Putting aside the old boys (and girls) club's admiration of Johnson's efforts to placate (i.e., lie to) whomever he was addressing—see, for example, Doris Kearns Goodwin—what, finally, does it matter whether Johnson conveyed to some people, with his own tape running, that he felt bad about Vietnam? What matters, and needs more serious attention, is that he did it.

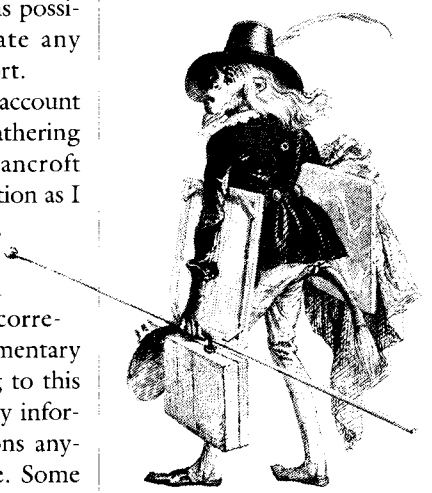
JESSE LEMISCH
Department of History
John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York

ISHI'S COURAGE

I would like to make some low-profile clarifications of Christopher Shea's sketch "The Return of Ishi's Brain" [February]. The Smithsonian recommended repatriation of Ishi's brain in April 1999; if its report was "hurried," the scholarly judiciousness of the report is even more praiseworthy. Professional linguists with expertise in Yana/Yahi have been studying Ishi's language for several years through material dictated by him—some of their work will be published next fall. I am now searching for funds to assist these excellent scholars to publish more as quickly as possible—I will appreciate any suggestions for support.

I am *not* writing an account of this affair. I am gathering for deposit in the Bancroft Library as full a collection as I can assemble of reports, scholarly articles, journalistic accounts (such as Shea's), personal correspondence, and commentary of every kind relating to this matter: I welcome any information or observations anyone cares to send me. Some items already sent me have revealed new sources of facts about Ishi, and the collection should become a useful source for future (possibly amused) students of American academia of our era.

In my minor and peripheral engagement with this affair, my primary purpose has not been to defend my father, Alfred Kroeber. The value of his accomplishments will not be diminished by self-promoters of current political correctness. My principal intent has been to protest against those who, under the guise of sympathy for Native Americans, disparage Ishi. The choice Ishi made to emerge from years of concealment and put himself in the hands of those who had wantonly murdered his people was an act of extraordinary moral courage. That he sought more than mere physical survival is proved by the hopefulness, intelligent energy, and responsiveness with which, in his final years, he made his terrible experience yield positive results—not just for himself but also for those with whom he associated, all of whom came to admire him and to enjoy his company. I believe that scholars who, whatever their idealistic claims, reduce Ishi to a stereotypical victim insult him as an individual and, through



him, Native American cultures, such as the Yana/Yahi culture that equipped him with forms of living that enabled him to manifest in so exemplary a fashion the primary human virtues of dignity, self-respect, and a capacity for personal friendship with those unlike him in language, culture, and experience.

KARL KROEBER
Mellon Professor in the Humanities
Columbia University

FAITH WITHOUT FOUNDATIONS

Charlotte Allen's "The Postmodern Mission" [December/January] confuses two issues that ought to be kept distinct—the aim of evangelical Protestant colleges to sustain some sort of coherent identity and the work of theologians and Scripture scholars in those colleges who have been influenced by postmodernism. As a result, Allen presents misleading pictures both of the scholars' work and of the political battles that surround it.

Allen draws the inference that since many so-called postmodernists are skeptical about claims to universal reason and objective validity, theologians who draw on their work must therefore be liberals or revisionists dedicated to the radical revamping of doctrine. Yet a quick perusal of Kenneson, Hauerwas, and others shows that not to be the case. Both theological liberals and theological conservatives believe, as Hauerwas puts it, that they can affirm the truth of their religious convictions apart from the expression of these convictions in religious tradition, practice, and worship. The scholars mentioned in Allen's article think this is a blind alley and thus abjure this foundationalist quest. They are both postliberal and postconservative. Dispensing with the need to provide neutral foundations for religious faith, they are free to affirm its details without epistemic embarrassment.

The evangelical conservatives who see this scholarship as a threat to Christian identity and education thus either have not been reading it very closely or are oblivious of the extent to which their own agenda is tied up with "the Enlightenment project" of sliding independent, incorrigible foundations under their religious convictions. To view theological postmodernism as just another rehash of 1960s "death of God theology" or nineteenth-century revisionism is to miss the point massively.

MICHAEL J. QUIRK
The New School/ Hofstra University

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WHY YOUR SELF-ESTEEM IS PROBABLY TOO HIGH

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Human beings, as it turns out, have too much faith in themselves. The detection of falsehood is scarcely the only domain where they overestimate their abilities. A survey of British motorists not long ago revealed that 95 percent thought they were better-than-average drivers. Similarly, most people think they are likely to live longer than the mean. In a classic 1977 paper in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology,* Baruch Fischhoff, Paul Slovic, and Sarah Lichtenstein reported that people often pronounce themselves absolutely certain of beliefs that are untrue. Subjects would declare themselves 100 percent sure that, say, the potato originated in Ireland, when it actually came from Peru.

Overconfidence is nearly universal. In fact, a study some years ago found that the only group of people free from it—the only group with a realistic view of their own capacities—were the clinically depressed. But is overconfidence distributed equally? Not according to a widely publicized paper in last December's issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.* The authors, David A. Dunning of Cornell and his graduate student Justin Kruger, drew a poignant conclusion from their research: The most incompetent people have the most inflated notion of their abilities. "Not only do they reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices," the two psychologists wrote, "but their incompetence robs them of the ability to realize it."

Dunning and Kruger administered three tests, measuring ability in logic, English grammar, and humor appreciation (the subjects' ratings of jokes were judged against those of a panel of professional comedians). In all three areas, the subjects who did worst were the most likely to "grossly overestimate" how well they had performed. Those who scored in the twelfth percentile in the logic test, for example, imagined that their skill in logic was at the sixty-eighth percentile.

Now, if you are among the competent, you might derive some consolation from this research, since it implies that you are unlikely to be grossly overconfident. But perhaps you simply *imagine* that you are among the competent—precisely because you suffer from the overconfidence of the incompetent. And there is more to worry about. Overconfidence may decrease with competence, but other studies show that it increases with knowledgeability; that is, the more specialized information you have about something, the more likely you are to be overconfident in your judgments about it. Overconfidence also tends to rise with the complexity of the problem. This means that experts reasoning about difficult matters—doctors, engineers, financial analysts, academics, even the pope when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*—are apt to be seriously overconfident in the validity of their conclusions.

Let me illustrate the point with an anecdote. Paul Erdos was one of the supreme mathematicians of the last century. He was also one of the world's leading experts on probability theory. Indeed, he invented the probabilistic method, which is often simply referred to as the Erdos method—thus making his name synonymous with probability (and an apparent exception to Stigler's law [see last month's Hypotheses]).

In 1991, Erdos found himself befuddled when the *Parade* magazine columnist Marilyn vos Savant published a probability puzzle called the Monty Hall problem, named after the emcee of the defunct game show *Let's Make a Deal.* It goes like this: There are three doors on stage, labeled A, B, and C. Behind one of them is a sports car; behind the other two are goats. You get to choose one of the doors and keep whatever is behind it. Let's suppose you choose door A. Now, instead of showing you what's behind door A, Monty Hall slyly opens door B and reveals...a goat. He then offers you the option of switching to door C. Should you take it? (Assume, for the sake of argument, that you are indifferent to the charm of goats.)

Counterintuitively enough, the answer is that you should switch, since a switch increases your chance of winning from one-third to two-thirds. Why? When you initially chose door A, there was a one-third chance you would win the car. Monty's crafty revelation that there's a goat behind door B gives no new information about what's behind the door you already chose—you already *know* one of the other two doors has to conceal a goat—so the likelihood that the car is behind door A remains one-third. Which means that, with door B eliminated, there is a two-thirds chance that the car is behind door C.

But Erdos insisted to his friends it wasn't so. His intuition told him that switching should make no difference in the odds. And this peerless authority on probability was confident in his intuition—so confident that he remained in high dudgeon for several days, until a mathematician at Bell Labs finally made him see his error. (This episode is recounted in recent biographies by Bruce Schechter and Paul Hoffman. Any reader who is still reluctant to switch can find a fuller discussion at www.linguafranca.com.)

One final generalization can be drawn from the psychological literature: High levels of confidence are usually associated with high levels of *over*confidence. The gap between conviction and truth seems to be greatest in the case of those judgments about which one feels most certain. Who knows? The most overconfident judgment in history might turn out to be *cogito ergo sum.*

JIM HOLT

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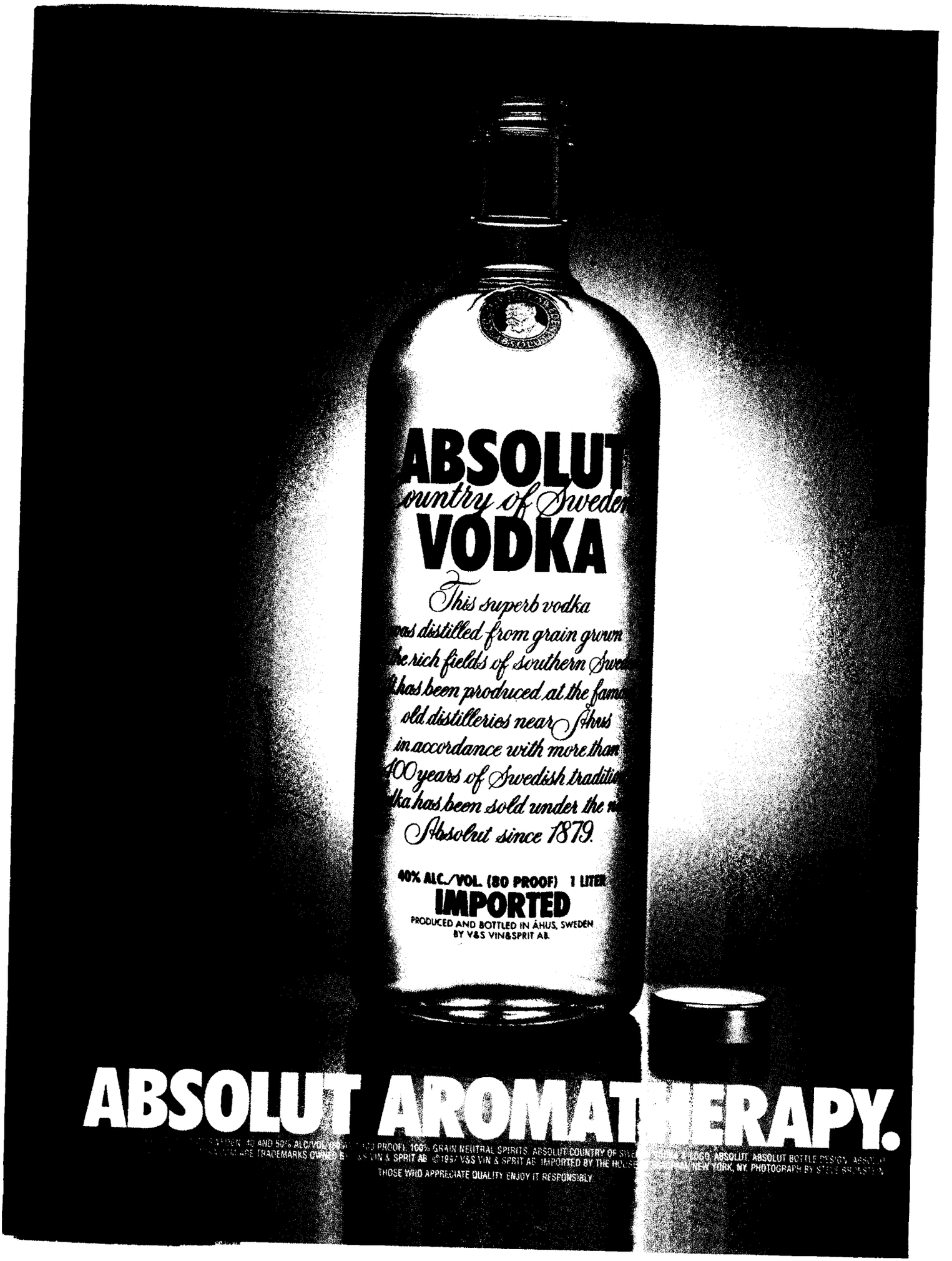
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